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IMPARTIAL ENQUIRY

INTO THE EXISTENCE AND

NATURE OF GOD:

Being a MODEST ESSAY towards a more
INTELLIGIBLE ACCOUNT of the
DIVINE PERFECTIONS.

With REMARKS on several AUTHORS
both ANCIENT and MODERN; and
Particularly on Some Passages in Dr. CLARKE'S
DEMONSTRATION OF THE
BEING AND ATTRIBUTES
OF GOD.

IN TWO BOOKS.

With an APPENDIX concerning the Nature of
SPACE and DURATION.

By S. C. *Samuel Clarke*

Sapientiam sibi adinunt, qui sine ullo Judicio Inventa Majorum probant. Sed hoc eos fallit, quod Majorum nomine audito, non putant fieri posse ut aut ipsi plus sapiant, quia Minores vocantur, aut illi desipuerint, quia Majores nominantur. Lactantius Lib. 2. Divinarum Inst. Cap. 8.

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THE PREFACE.

FOR a Book to appear abroad without Something like a Preface is now reputed no less an Incivility than for a Stranger to intrude into Company without either Recommendation or Excuse. Yet as the most Handsom Excuse or Introduction can never recommend in Conversation if Personal merit be wanting; so if a Book can't speak for it's Self, the Preface might as wel have been Silent. 'Tis after a Serious and Impartial Perusal that we first become qualify'd to judge of a Performance; and whatever is said til then can only tend to draw people off from that Impartiality to which the Author Himself Ever pretends, and which he can't but allow to his Readers.

Yet I'm very sensible it may be thought to need an Apology that a Layman should venture on a Subject which seem's Proper to Divines, and which (by the Encouragement of the Late Excellent Mr. Boyle) has been cultivated by so many of the most Learned of that Profession. This indeed was an Objection which I could not fail to make to my Self, and which might probably have prevented any such Attempt, had my Design at first been any other than my Own Private Satisfaction. But 'tis hop'd those Learned Gentlemen wil be so far from resenting this Publication, that they'l rather be pleas'd with so Fair an Opportunity of clearing the Difficultys which may remain on so Important a Subject.

As God is the Great Object of Religion, so a Rational Perswasion of his Existence and Perfections can't but be the most Solid Foundation of Religious Practice; and by consequence both of our Present and Future Happiness. 'Tis then neither Unnecessary nor Unseasonable to endeavour the exciting men to those Enquirys whose Neglect or Ill Success ap-

THE PREFACE.

pear's to be the Chief Occasion of most of those Inconveniences which Mankind either Suffer's or Fear's.

The Former Consideration first encourag'd me, for my Own Satisfaction, to encounter Difficultys which have Exercis'd the Greatest Wits in All Ages; and so often to tread Unbeaten Paths in the Search of Truth. The Latter is the Motive which now chiefly induce's me to Publish These Thoughts for the General Good.

If what is here offer'd may be of any use to determinen the Least of those Unhappy Disputes which have so long Distracted the Christian World (which appear to have chiefly proceeded from Mistaken Principles of Natural Religion;) I shal think my Pains sufficiently rewarded.

Notwithstanding what Some may imagin of the Delicacy of the Present Age, I can't but flatter my self that the Same Curiosity which ha's prompted it to make so deep Researches into All Parts of the Mathematicks and Other Abstruse Sciences wil tempt it to enquire into what is here produc't. Which if it should happen, 'tis to be hop'd that one half of the Application which is requir'd to render a man Master of any one Book of Euclid wil be sufficient firmly to establish People in the Fundamental Principles of Religion and Morality. And how Great a Satisfaction it must needs be to find firm Anchorage in the midst of the Fluctuations of a Sea of different Opinions, and thereby to obtain an Equal Freedom from the Causeless Fears and the Vain Hopes of the Vulgar (Rocks tho sufficiently Opposite yet alike Dangerous) may, it's conceiv'd, be more easily Experienc'd than Imagin'd.

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A N

IMPARTIAL ENQUIRY, INTO THE EXISTENCE AND NATURE OF GOD.

BOOK THE FIRST.

C H A P. I.

THE Human mind is never so agreeably employ'd as when it try's it's strength in Enquirys of this sort: When it take's a View of the whole Frame of Nature and discover's the mighty Spring which set it in motion: When it pierc'es into the inmost substance of things to that Invisible Cement which unite's 'em: When it trace's 'em back to their Original, and from the Nature of the Effects infer's the Perfection of the Cause, and when from a nearer acquaintance with the Perfection of the First Cause it proceed's to form Rules for it's own Conduct in order to a more exact Conformity to so Noble a Pattern.

Some Thousands of Years have been already spent in these Enquirys. And considerable Discoverys have been made both from Scripture and Reason; sufficient at least for the Conduct of Life; and perhaps enough to have satisfi'd any Age less Curious and Philosophical than our Own. But it ha's been our Fortune to visit the world at a time wherein as we have seen the Range and Compass of Human Knowledge so nicely adjusted and determin'd, so we see daily Attempts towards the extending,

it to it's utmost Limits. The Event, it's to be Hop'd; may at last be, that the Great Truths, of Religion and Morality will be fixt on their Proper and Natural Principles, and All set in so Clear a Light that, by a nearer Agreement in Opinion, Human Nature may appear with more Uniformity, and Piety may be thought as necessary to complete the Character of a Man of Sense as Libertinism and Immorality have been.

'Tis, I think, the Right and Duty of every Capable Person to improve and employ his Facultys, and to take, his own Measures in the Search of Truth. There must be a *Judgment of Discretion* with reference to the Scriptures, and a Liberty of Reasoning in all other Cases: Provided it be exercis'd with Modesty from a Sincere Desire to discover and embrace the Truth, and with an entire submission to better Information.

I conceive that whoever wil undertake an Enquiry of this nature can't begin it better than with an Impartial Search into such Mistakes and Mismanagements as may have caus'd the ill Success of former Enquirers. Several of these we shal, perhaps, discover in the Present Case. Which we shal briefly mention; not with design to expose the Failings and Weaknesses of Others, but purely to form such Cautions as may be of use to our selves.

The Occasions of any ill Success which may have attended former Enquirys we shal find to have been either more General and Common to All or most of the preceding Ages or Nations, or more Particular and Peculiar to some.

The more General wil appear to have been,

1. *Interest and Design.* These were more especially the Imperfections of the *Priests*. The First Lawgivers or Founders of Civil Polity among the Pagans finding how difficult it was to infuse the sentiments of Religion and Civility into the stupid Unthinking Vulgar by Argument and Perswasion, did it most Effectually by a Pretense of Divine Enthusiasms and Revelations. By this method they wisely serv'd themselves of that Principle of Fear, which is so deeply rooted in Human Nature and is ever the strongest and most vigorous Spring of Action: Of which we generally

rally find those to be the most susceptible who ly least open to the methods of Conviction. Thus *Zamolxis* wrought the Rude Unpolisht *Scythians* into a Belief that he receiv'd the Laws and Precepts of his Religion in a Den where he said he convers'd with the Gods. *Numa* the Founder of Religion and Civility among the *Romans* is said to have conceal'd himself in a wood, pretending to receive Instructions from the Goddess *Ægeria*. And *Mango Copac* the Introducer of the *Peruvian* Superstition is reported to have feign'd himself to have been sent on his Errand by his Parent the Sun.

To carry on the Design so successsfully begun, we find that a certain Order of men was every where instituted whose Peculiar Employment it was to instruct the People in the Dutys of Religion. And to give the greater Reputation and Authority to the *Priesthood*, we find that Princes themselves thought it no Disparagement to unite the Mitre with the Crown and, at once, to Rule and Teach their Subjects. Thus among the Ancient *Egyptians*, the Kings were always invested with the High-Priesthood and entrusted with the Mysteries of their Religion as well as Government. The like is reported of *Numa* among the *Romans*.

But tho' the Design of those Primitive Lawgivers was good, yet since their Models of Religion were not sufficiently founded on Reason, but Politickly set together in such a manner as was most agreeable to the Humour and Relish of the People to whom they were propos'd, and most subservient to the Present Intent of the Institutors; they, in time, prov'd the Occasions of great Inconveniences. For the Pretence of Revelation became an Effectual Bar to future Improvements: The Priests fearing lest the Alteration of any Particular should tempt the People to suspect the whole, and call in question the Revelation on which 'twas founded. And the Priesthood, which, at first, was so Noble and Useful an Institution, degenerating by degrees into a Trade, and being taken up by Most with no other View or Design but that of Gain, the Priests soon found it their Interest to discourage all such Speculations as tended to breed a dislike
of

An Enquiry into the Existence,
of that superstition which yielded'em such great secular
Advantages.

In some Countreys indeed we read that the Priests were Philosophers too. But tho' we may believe that they themselves, by the exercise of Reason, discover'd the Vanity of many of those Methods of Religion which had been impos'd on the People; yet they industriously conceal'd their sentiments as *Mysteries* not to be imparted to the Vulgar, whose Ignorance was the chief support of that profitable Devotion which Interest taught em to cherish and improve. At least, they were not very inclinable to be at the Expense of much pains in Matters of Speculation, when they observ'd the People might be treated at a far cheaper rate with trifling Ceremonys and Religious Pageantry. This is certain, that we find'em in the general so far from instructing the People either in better Principles or Methods of Worship, that they rather added to the Imposture by frequent Inventions of New and more Gainful Fopperies.

2. Another considerable Obstruction to the Increase and Improvement of Divine Knowledge in the Former ages of the World was *Pride* or *Vanity*. This seem's to have been the Epidemical Disease of the *Philosophers*. We may trace it's Symptoms as wel among the slovenly *Cynicks* of Greece or the Naked *Gymnosophists* of *Aethiopia* as among the Proliter *Magi* of *Persia* or *Brachmans* of *India*. This divided 'em into innumerable Factions, and often caus'd their Philosophy to degenerate into Big Words and Insignificant Sophistry; while almost every man had a more passionate Concern for the Reputation of his Sect than for the Interest of Truth. A remarkable Instance of this Philosophical Pride is to be metwith in the Life of *Apollonius Tyanæus*. Who travelling into *India* to converse with the *Brachmans* was told by 'em that he might propose what Questions he pleas'd, since he was come to men who knew All Things. And for ought appear's by their Magical Juggings and a few quibbling Reply's to his Questions they, at last, so far impos'd on that Philosopher as to work him into a Beliet of this their pretended Omniscience. And certainly, when men once arrive either at such a pitch of Distraction as

to imagin Themselves ignorant of Nothing; or at such a degree of Folly as to believe it concerning Others, we need not be surpris'd if either the Former sort lay aside all Endeavours after further Improvement, or the Latter neglect all other Methods, and depend entirely on the Oracular Dictates of such Pretenders.

3. Another Hindrance to this sort of Knowledge was *Ignorant Zeal*. This was the General Unhappiness of the *Populace*, and was a Tool which their Priests very well knew how to use to their own Advantage. Thus when *Socrates* had divulg'd some Notions tending to mar their Trade, they fail'd not to set the People against him, and never ceas'd til that Great Man fel a Sacrifice to their Resentments. This and divers other Instances of the like nature could not but be a very great Mischief, either by entirely discouraging Enquirys of this sort, or at least by obliging men to dissemble and disguise their sentiments.

These appear to have been the General Causes of the little Progress of Divine Knowledge in the Former Ages of the World. The more Particular are to be deriv'd from the Peculiar Genius and Constitutions of the several Nations and Sects which have distinguish'd themselves in this sort of Philosophy. These were the *Eastern Pagans*, the *Greeks*, the *Romans*, the *Jews*, and the *Christians*.

1. The *Eastern Pagans*. Such were the *Indians*, *Chaldeans*, *Persians*, *Phœnicians*, *Æthiopians*, and *Ægyptians*. These appear to have been, for the most part, of a Light, Desulrory Wit, Impatient of Thought, Conceited of their Knowledge, scorning to borrow from Others, and backward to communicate of their Own. Their Divine Learning was preserv'd, or rather imprison'd, by certain particular Orders or Societys of men. Among the *Indians* by the *Brachmans*, among the *Chaldeans* and *Persians* by the *Zabij* and *Magi*, among the *Æthiopians* by the *Gymnosophists*, and among the *Ægyptians* by their *Arsepedonaptæ* or Priests. It consisted of certain *Cabala's* or Rhapsodies of Traditional Opinions neither clearly exprest nor, perhaps, well understood. These they appear to have taken upon trust, convinc't by no Argument so much as by the Reputation and Authority of their *Brahma*, *Zoroaster*, *Hermes*, and the other Introducers of their

respective Superstitions. The Dictates of These they esteem'd as Sacred and Unimproveable ; and thought they acquitted themselves sufficiently wel by barely transmitting'em safe to their Posteritys. Their Reputation for Wisdom in Divine Matters seem's to have been chiefly owing to their Magical Tricks and Mystic Ceremonies and Hieroglyphicks : It being the General Weakness of men most to admire what they least comprehend,

2. The *Greeks*. These learnt the Rudiments of their Divine Philosophy from the *Ægyptians*. *Orpheus*, who first imported the *Ægyptian* Mysteries into *Greece*, begun that Commerce which was carry'd on and improv'd by Many of the Succeeding Poets and Philosophers. Insomuch that it became a Common Practice to travel into other Countrys to traffick for Notions, and to pick up Straggling Traditions, which when they came home they drest with a Grecian Air, and vended for their own. Yet these were generally the Best of their Philosophers. For such as kept at home, and spun their Opinions out of their own Brains (tho' divers of 'em Men of Great Wit and Industry) were, for the most part, too much troubl'd with the Itch of Innovation and the Ambition of seeming considerable by setting themselves at the head of new Sects. Hence sprung perpetual Brawls and a confus'd Medly of Opinions, til their Philosophy (their Morality excepted) either vanisht in Scepticism or, to a great degree, degenerated into the most ridiculous Sophistry.

3. The *Romans*. These were, at first, a Rude Unpolisht People, more addicted to Arms than Arts. Twas a considerable time e're they would admit the Greek Philosophy; partly out of Pride, as scorning to be taught by Inferiours, partly out of Policy, as fearing lest it should soften and debase their Spirits. Bnt, afterwsrds, we find they seldom conquer'd a Country bnt they were very careful to introduce it's Gods into the Pantheon, and it's Arts and Sciences into their Academics. The First of the Grecian Arts that got admission at *Rome* and made way for the rest to follow was *Rhetorick*. Tho' nothing seem'd better qualifi'd to obtain a Welcome among those Rough Mortals than the Art of Perswasion

it's Self, yet it's Success wasn't so much the Effect of it's own Force as of another Cause. *Rome* was then become an Enemy to the Name as well as to the Power of Kings, and had molded it's self into the form of a Commonwealth. The Supreme Power resided in the People; and such as could best make their court to Them stood the fairest Candidates on all Elections to Places of Honour and Profit. This made All who aspir'd to Commands in the Commonwealth very fond of that Art which gain'd 'em so great Influence on the People and taught 'em to govern their Superiours. Wherefore we need not wonder that *Rhetorick* lost nothing but rather improv'd by being transplanted to *Rome*, where no Culture was wanting to render it more flourishing than in it's Native Soil. But as for *Philosophy*, the Case was different. The Philosophers had wrangl'd themselves out of much of the Reputation they had formerly gain'd. They found but few *Dionysuses* or *Alexanders* ev'n in Greece. Besides, the Bent of the Roman Genius was entirely turn'd upon Action. A People bred amidst the Noise of Arms could find but little convenience for Contemplation. And ev'n afterwards, when *Philosophy* begun to be somewhat fashionable at *Rome* we find but few that made it their Business. The Generality consider'd it chiefly as an Agreeable Amusement in their Retreats from the service of the Publick; content to strike in with some or other of the Grecian Sects, without attempting either to set up for Themselves, or to improve on the Ancient Stock.

4. The *Jews*. Their Theology, as is well known, was entirely founded on Revelation. They reason'd but little upon it for a long time; having less tempration than other People, as enjoying that Satisfaction by a long series of Miracles and Predictions which as effectually convinc't 'em of the Truth of their Revelation as the Immediate Testimony of Reason could have done. Yet when Miracles and Predictions became less frequent, towards the Declination of the Jewish State, we find they begun to Philosophize after the manner of their Neighbours. Especially after their Conquest by *Antiochus*

chus Epiphanes who erected an Academy at *Jerusalem* to instruct 'em in the *Pythagorean*, *Platonick* and *Epicurean* Philosophy. Thence sprung divers Sects and Variety of Opinions which, in a great degree, continu'd notwithstanding the severe Prohibition of the Grecian Learning by the *Maccabees*. Yet they never appear'd to be any Great Masters in the Art of Reasoning: Both their Ancient and Modern Philosophy being little else but a Medly of Ridiculous Apophthegms and Extravagant Conceits concerning their Law and their Traditions which they prefer before it.

5. The *Christians*. These reason'd but little at First; Chiefly for the same Cause with the Ancient Jews, viz, on account of the frequent Miracles; which were more confirming to Themselves and convictive to their Adversarys than Arguments. When they begun to dispute with the Heathens, they usually fought'em with their own Weapons, and confuted'em from their own Principles. For the most Celebrated Fathers of the Primitive Church were bred in *Plato's* School. Yet thô this did'em some service against their Adversarys, it, at last, turn'd to the great Prejudice of Themselves. For some of the Principles which they had borrow'd from that Philosopher not wel suiting with divers of the Doctrines of their Religion, produc't Endless Disputes; Which not a little distracted their thoughts, and prevented the Improvement of Real Knowledge. At last, *Plato's* Philosophy grew out of date, and *Aristotle* (First introduc't by *Boëtius*) began to be ador'd. Then Learning was nothing else but an Insight into his Opinions, and that was always reputed Truth which he asserted. Soon after, the Papal Hierarchy was establish't principally by means of the Ignorance and well-manag'd Superstition of the Conquering *Barbarians*. Then Learning, such as it was, was confin'd to the Convents, and no sin so zealously reprov'd and punish't in the People as the sin of *knowing too much*. Men of Wit were every where list'd to the service of a Faction, and Reason brib'd to vote in favour of it's two greatest Adversarys, Ignorance and Implicit Credulity. At last, the Reformation commend't; Ignorance and Credulity grew out of Reputation, and

and a generous sense of Liberty begun to revive. But as yet, Men, too timorous in the use of the Liberty they had gain'd, instead of taking their own Measures in the Search of Truth, were careful only to restore the Ancient Learning, and condemn'd themselves to dig in the Rubbish of Antiquity. By this method they gave a Resurrection to an Infinity of Opinions which, perhaps, had better lain buried as before. And'tis but within our own Memory that men have made much use of their Reason, and introduc'd a sort of Free Philosophy which yield's a better prospect of Success than ever.

CHAP. II.

BY what has been observ'd it appear's that the ill Success both of Jews and Christians in Enquiries of this nature was chiefly owing to their too great affectation of some of the Grecian Sects. Of whose Methods thô we could not have giv'n an account from History, yet we might have found sufficient to have produc'd in us no great opinion of their Discoverys by the Idea Cicero give's us of their Divine Philosophy in his Book *De Natura Deorum*.

'Tis the General Observation of that Learned Roman that nothing can be imagin'd so Silly and Ridiculous which ha'sn't found a Patron among those Philosophers. And thô they manag'd some of their Proofs of the Existence of a God with sufficient Evidence, yet when they came to treat of his Nature he assure's us that he found 'em so Absurd and Various that he thought it a fruitless Labour to reckon up their Opinions. For it seem's they were, many of 'em, so fond of Variety that they had too little regard to Truth or Probability; and were so careful to disagree from each other that they sometimes neglected to be consistent with Themselves. Which Humour of Novelty and Contradiction ha's no less discover'd it's self on other Occasions; but especially in their Disputes concerning the Material Principle of the Universe, and the *Summum Bonum* or Chief Good.

How Malignant an Influence those Dissentions have
B had

had on an Age which is stil so generally inclin'd to li-
mit the Utmost Extent of Science by the Opinions of
the Ancients, is too evident. Multitudes are tempted to
doubt of, and not a few to disbelieve what appear's to ha-
ve been so little understood by those Mighty Pretenders.
And such as profess a confirm'd and settl'd Perswasion of the
Existence of a God are yet, for the most part, dispos'd to
lay aside all Enquirys into the Perfections of his Nature,
as Things entirely above their Sphere and Capacitys.

Yet, lest the Understandings of men should appear with
less Variety than in Former Ages, we have another Set of
Gentlemen, addicted to the New *Cartesian Metaphysicks*,
who would perswade us that the Deity is the Plainest and
most Intelligible Thing in Nature. That every man bring's
into the World an *Innate Idea* of a God, or a Confutation
of Atheism as it were engraven on his own Mind. And
that if we have not from thence a sufficiently Clear and
Distinct Knowledge of our Maker, 'tis not for want of
Light and Perspicuity in the Object, but through a Wilful
Blindness and the most Culpable Inadvertency in our
Selves.

As for the Gentlemen of the Former Perswasion, 'twou'd,
I conceive, be to little purpose to go about to convince 'em
of the Possibility of a Satisfactory Knowledge of the Deity
by Arguments, unless we could wake the Experiment and
convince 'em by the Success of the following Essay.

And as for the Latter Sort, I perswade my self 'twou'd
be alike impertinent, in this place, to spend time in arguing
against their pretended *Innate Idea*, when the whole Suc-
ceeding Discourse wil, 'tis hop'd, be the best Confutation
of it. For if it can be made appear that God ha's giv'n
us the Ability of acquiring, with so much ease a Sufficient
Knowledge of Himself in the way of Reason and Ar-
gument, 'twil, I conceive, be abundantly clear how
unnecessary it is to suppose any such *Epicurean Prolepsis*
or Anticipation of the use of Reason as is imply'd by
the Opinion of an *Innate Idea*. For, as the late Excel-
lent Mr. Locke observ'd, 'twere *Impertinent to imagin the*
Ideas of Colours to be Innate in any Being to whom God
ha's giv'n Sight.

Nor

Nor ought it to be objected that because so many make so little use of their Facultys therefore we must have recourse to an Innate Idea if we pretend to account for the Universality of the Belief of a God. For, admitting the Usual Idea of the Divine Being to be as Universal as they suppose, how shal we be assur'd that this Suppos'd Universality is not owing to Tradition? As this Negative is impossible to be prov'd so, on the contrary, it seem's no difficult matter to make appear from the Testimony of Former Ages that there ha's actually been an Ancient Immemorial Tradition of the Formation of the World by a Beneficent, Wise and most Powerful Being: Which alone was sufficient to diffuse the Principles of Religion as Universally as the pretended Innate Idea is conceiv'd to have done.

CHAP. III.

THô the Authority of Tradition, if it appear to have been Perpetual and Uninterrupted, wil Ever have it's due Weight with All Considering Men; yet when a Thing is Capable of Other Proof, nothing is so Grateful and Convictive as the Immediate Testimony of Reason. Wherefore, thô by the means of Education and Example, we have receiv'd a General Traditional Notion of the Existence and Perfections of the Deity, and of the Precepts and Obligations of Religion, yet 'tis very fit that in a Matter of so great Concern we should make use of such Assistance as Reason is capable of yielding us.

Thô Some too Nice Metaphysicians have of late been teaching us to doubt of the very Fundamental Principles of All Certainty, yet I perswade my self None that isn't dispos'd to trifle wil expect any Greater Evidence than what Immediately arise's from *the Internal Consciousness* which we have *of our Own Existence* and *the Concurrent Testimony of our External Senses*.

Now the Existence of a God or *most Perfect Being* is a most Direct and Natural Consequence of that *Consciousness* which we have of our Existence.

This may appear from the Following Reflections.

As we have Infallible Evidence that We our selves are; so from thence we may have no less Assurance that Something ha's Ever been. For supposing that there Once was Nothing, we may be as sure that neither We nor Any Other Being could Ever have existed as either that Nothing could not produce Something, or that Something could not produce it's Self.

'Twas therefore never doubted by any Sober Reasoner that Some Being Eternally existed. The only Question ha's been, what manner of Being an Eternal Being is: which to discover will be the Chief Design of the Ensuing Enquiry.

Now, in the First place, 'tis evident that an Eternal Being was Ever a *Necessary Being*. The Reason is, because it was without Beginning. For 'tis as certain that a Being without Beginning Necessarily Was, as that there was never any Possibility of it's not having been.

In the next place, 'tis clear not only that an *Original* Eternal Being was Ever Necessary, or such as could not but have been; but likewise that it was an *Absolutely Necessary Being*, which, by consequence, must Ever continue to Be.

By an *Absolutely Necessary Being* I understand (not what exist's without any Reason of it's Existence but) such a Being as Ever contain'd a Necessary Reason of it's Existence in it's very Nature, without the least Dependence either on it's Own Wil or on that of any Other Being.

That there could be no Other Being on whose Wil and Causality such an Eternal Being could depend is Selfevident. And that it's Own Wil (which, as is equally clear, was not Antecedent to it's Existence) could have no Influence on it's Existence or on the Continuation of it, is no less manifest. Consequently, the Reason of it's Necessary Existence must have been either included in it's very Nature, or else there must have been no Reason of it at all; which is Absurd. But to include a Necessary Reason of it's Existence in it's very Nature without the least Dependence either on it's Own Wil or on that of any Other Being is (as we before ob-

observ'd) to be Strictly and Absolutely Necessary.

'Tis therefore clear both that [there is an Eternal, Independent Being], and that such an Eternal Being can't but be Absolutely Necessary. Our next Attempt must be to gain a more Particular Knowledge of such a Being. To which End, it's humbly conceiv'd, we need only to consider the Import of an *Absolute Necessity of Existence*.

In the General, it must, I think, be confest that there's Something in the very Idea of an Absolute Necessity of Existence which strike's a Considerate. Mind and dispose's it to believe that the Reason of Such Necessity must be Somewhat very Wonderful. Wherefore, the most Natural as wel as the most Probable Method of acquiring a more Particular Knowledge of such an Eternal Nature is, 'tis humbly conceiv'd, to make some Enquiry into that Reason of Necessary Existence which we have observ'd it to include and possess. To which end we shal proceed by steps.

First, 'tis, I think, sufficiently demonstrable that the Reason of an Absolute Necessity of Existence can be no less than a Complication of *All Actual Perfections*; or that there's no Kind nor Degree of Perfection which is not comprehended in the Nature of such a Necessary Being. For tho' we should suppose *Divers* Absolutely Necessary Beings, yet no Reason could be imagin'd why One should possess Either More or Greater Perfection than Another; thy being Equally Independent in Existence: Or, which is the Same, an Equal Actual Perfection must be suppos'd as the Ground or Reason of the Absolute Necessity of Each. But, supposing but *One* Absolutely Necessary or Independent Being, 'twil be yet more evident that it must possess All Actual Perfections, whether we conceive it (with the Atheist) to be the *Only Being*, or (with the Theist) to be the *Author of All Other Beings*. For that the *Only Being* must possess All Actual Perfections is no less than Selfevident. And that the *Author of All Other Beings* can Himself want nothing of that Perfection which he ha's communicated to his Effects is sufficiently Undeniyable.

Again, 'Tis, I conceive, Equally certain that the Reason of an Absolute Necessity of Existence can be no less than a Complication of *All Possible Perfections*; and, by consequence that no imaginable Accession of any sort could have render'd an Absolutely Necessary Being more Perfect than it Actually is.

We have already observ'd that for a Being to exist with an Absolute Necessity is to contain in it's Self a Necessary Reason of it's Existence, without the least Dependence either on it's Own Wil or on that of Any Other Being; or, which is in effect the same, to be of such a Nature as render's it an Absolute Contradiction that it ever should either Cease to Be or become Other than it Actually is; viz, by an *Essential Mutation*. To This we may now add, That if a Being is in any respect Essentially Imperfect, it can be no such Absolute Contradiction for it to become Imperfect in Any Other respect. For there's No Imperfection in Any Being but what imply's a Possibility (or Non-repugnance) of yet farther and Greater Imperfection; and consequently of the Greatest of All Imperfections, viz, a *Ceasing to Be*. From which Principles it manifestly follow's, That if there's such a Being whose Nature Necessarily exclude's the very Possibility of *Ceasing to Be*, it can be for no Other Reason, in the General, than because it Necessarily exclude's Every Possible Imperfection or, which is the Same, Necessarily include's *All Possible Perfections*.

Thus, with submission to better Judgments, I conceive it may be firmly demonstrated to be and to have been Eternally an Absolute Impossibility or Contradiction that such a Necessarily-existent Being should be other than Most Perfect, from the Absolute Inconsistence that there is between an Absolute Necessity of Existence and the least Real Imperfection. But to explain Particularly How it was such a Contradiction that no Being at all should have existed or, which is in effect the Same, to assign the Particular Immediate Reason of the Divine Existence, or to discover the Necessary Band of Union of All Possible Perfections in an Eternal Independent Being, is perhaps Impossible to Us. For we must not flatter

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our selves with the Expectation of a Complete Discovery of so Singular an Object : There being questionless Many Propertys in so Excellent a Nature of which we can here have no Idea. And the Particular Property or Propertys which have a Necessary Immediate Connection with Existence and All Other Perfections may, perhaps, be of that Number.

Being advanc't thus far, we may with the Greatest Assurance affirm that there is a God, i: e.:, an *Eternal, Absolutely-necessary and most Perfect Being*. Of this there can, I think, be no Doubt, whatever Doubt there may be with reference to Some Particular Notions of his Perfection.

CHAP. IV.

IN order to a more Particular Discovery of the Nature of such a Perfect Being, 'twil be necessary, in the First place, carefully to consider the General Idea of *Perfection*. For This, tho' perhaps not usually consider'd as it deserv's, is the Standard whereby we are to form our Particular Ideas of an Eternal Independent Nature in the ensuing Enquiry.

The word *Perfect* was First us'd with reference to Artificial Things, or as signifying that which is Finisht or fully suited to the End for which 'twas design'd by the Artist. But, afterwards, we find the Word was adopted by the Philosophers, and us'd in more than One sense in their Reasonings on Natural and Metaphysical Subjects.

In the General, That is said by the Philosophers to be *Perfect*, which contain's whatever is included in the Idea which thy have of it's Nature. They conceive a Thing to be thus Perfect sometimes in an *Absolute*, sometimes in a *Relative* Sence. In the Former Sence. That only, say they, is Perfect whose Nature comprehend's an Absolutely Infinite Number of Kinds and Degrees of Perfection. And in This Sence an Eternal, Independent Nature is usually said to be Perfect. In the

Latter Sence Any Other Being is denominated Perfect which want's nothing of that which belong's to it's Particular Nature.

But whethet there be in Reality any such thing as an *Absolute Perfection* in the Sence before explain'd, may wel deserve our Enquiry.

That an Eternal, Independent Nature can't but be and Ever have been most Absolute, or Exclusive of any Proper Cause, is, it's confest, no less than Selfevident. By consequence, the Perfection which is a Necessary Property of Such a Nature, must be own'd to be most Absolute in the Same Sence. Yet it's humbly conceiv'd this do'sn't hinder but that the Highest Perfection may not be Absolute in Another Sence; i: e: it may not consist in an Absolutely infinite Number of Kinds and Degrees, but in an Immutable Relation to All Capable Objects. To assert that it consist's in an Absolutely Infinite Number of Kinds and Degrees is, I conceive, to obscure it's Idea by Unnecessary and Inextricable Difficultys; sincethe Idea of the Highest Possible Perfection can't possibly be form'd with an Infinity of Number but may very wel be form'd without it.

To make this appear 'twil be necessary to consider the Nature of *Number*.

If any Number be Absolutely or Infinitely Great, it can be for no other reason than because 'tis Absolutely or in it's very Nature Incapable of Increase without an Absolute Contradiction. But the very Nature of All Quantity infer's, on the contrary, a Necessity of the Increase of it's Greatness on the supposition of the least Addition. For since No Quantity is more or less Such, or possesse's more or less of the Nature of Quantity than Another, it follow's that All Quantities, being of the Same General Nature, must severally bear a Proportion to each other. For example, That can be no Unit which by the Addition of an Unit will not become Two. And, by parity of Reason, That is no Million which by the Addition but of a Single Unit wil not increase to the Greatness of a Million and an Unit. For if it be but a Million after the Addition of the Unit, 't is plain it must, before
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that Addition, have been less than a Million by an Unit. The like may be said of All Other Quantitys. But of This more at large hereafter.

These Considerations seem to conclude strongly against the supposition of an Absolute Perfection consisting in an Absolutely Infinite Number of Kinds and Degrees. Whereas, on the contrary, nothing can be more Easy and Intelligible than the Idea of Perfection in the *Relative Sense*, as before explain'd. For Perfection in This Sense is plainly the Same with *Sufficiency*. According to which Notion of it 'tis evident that as, among Inferiour Beings, That only can be said to be Perfect in it's Kind which possesse's whatever is necessary to render it Sufficient to the attaining it's Particular End; so Such a Being Only must needs possess the Highest Possible Perfection as is *Allsufficient*, or Naturally and Independently qualify'd for All Fit and suitable Ends.

To explain this General Conclusion by Particular Instances. The Perfection of *Power* may, it's conceiv'd, very wel consist in it's bearing an Immutable Relation of Proportionateness to All Fit and Capable Objects of Power in the General, or in it's being Independently Sufficient to produce Whatever is Fit and imply's not a Contradiction. For to Such Power tho' we should imagin further Degrees to be addible yet, since they would be in vain or to no purpose, they could not be conceiv'd to render it more Perfect by their Accession. The like may be said of *Wisdom*, *Knowledge*, or any Other Internal Property. The Estimate of whose Perfection is (it's conceiv'd) no otherwise to be made than with relation to their Objects either Actual or Possible. *

And as the Perfection of Property or Attributes is to be understood to consist in a Relation of Proportionateness to suitable and Capable Objects, so the Perfection of *Substance* (however we may conceive it) must, it seem's, consist in a like Relation to it's Property: And That must be a most Perfect Substance which is the Necessary subject of most Excellent and Perfect Property. But of this more wil be said in the Second Book.

* See Mr. Locke
of *Humane Und*: in
the *Begining* of his
Chapter of *Infinity*.

C H A P V.

THE Necessity wherewith such an Eternal Being exist's is, it seem's, the Source of All the Knowledge we are capable of acquiring of so Excellent a Nature. Wherefore since the Discovery of One Property of that Necessity (viz it's *Absoluteness*) ha's already led us to the Knowledge of the Perfection or Sufficiency of such a Being in the General, it may not be amiss, before we proceed to a Particular Consideration of that Perfection, to enquire what Other Property of the Original Necessity may be discoverable by Us.

When we reflect upon the Necessity with which Something Ever existed, we find that, next to it's Absoluteness or Independence, nothing is more obvious to our thoughts than it's *Unity*.

That the Original Necessity was Ever *One* as wel as Absolute is certain; because the Internal Reason of it was Ever *Uniform* and therefore not Necessary to More than One Being.

To make this evident we need only recall to mind what we before observ'd, That thô Something Ever existed without a *Cause*, yet Nothing could exist without a *Reason* of it's Existence. The Difference is, that whereas the Reason of the Existence of Beings not Independent was included in the Will of some Other Being, on the contrary, the Reason of the Existence and Necessity of an Eternal Independent Being was Ever included in it's Own Nature.

The Reason of Absolutely Necessary Existence we have already discover'd to be no less than the *Highest Possible Perfection*. Now, that Perfection was Ever *Uniform* and capable of existing in the Same Being, and by consequence could not Necessarily require more Beings than One, is, I think, too clear to be doubted. There's no Inconsistence or Contrariety in Perfection. Perfection is only of Good; of Evil there's no Perfection, for That consist's in Defect. Consequently, there could be nothing in the
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Nature of Perfection to determin the Original Necessity to more than One Being. An *Oromasdes* and *Arimanias* (or Two Eternal or Necessary Principles of Good and Evil) can have no Solid Foundation in Reason.

It can't indeed be deny'd that our Reason discover's Some Variety in the General Idea of Perfection; such as Wisdom, Power &c. But then This Variety, and whatever Other Variety May be found Necessary to be admitted in an Eternal Independent Being, we may be assur'd is Uniform, Consistent and included in the Nature of Perfection and by consequence not only may but must coëxist in One Being. So that, to deify an *Apollo*, or a *Hercules*; or to make Distinct Deitys of *Wisdom* and *Power*, was to attempt to divide that Perfection which was Ever One and Undivided.

The Sum of All is, That to suppose the Existence of More than One Absolutely Necessary Being, when the Reason of Absolute Necessity is in it's Self Uniform and; by consequence, not Necessary to More than One; is to suppose Absolutely Necessary Existence without a Necessary Reason of it: An Absurdity no less than it would be to suppose an Effect without a Cause.

The Result of All is, That there's but *One only Eternal, Absolutely Necessary and Most Perfect Being.*

CHAP. VI.

IN discovering the Perfection or Allsufficiency of the Eternal Independent Being in the General, we have laid a Firm Foundation for a more Particular Knowledge of that Supereminent Nature. For hereby we are not only instructed to ascribe to it whatever Excellencys we are acquainted with, but to believe it may possess Many Others of which we have no Idea. For we need not imagin either Our Natures or Acquaintance with the World to be so Complete as to render Our Ideas the Adequate Measures of the Supreme Perfection. The Utmost we are able to do is to consider what Ideas compose the General Idea we have of Perfection, and in what Manner they are to be conceiv'd

ceiv'd with reference to That Being which we are assur'd possesse's the Highest Possible Perfection.

But before we proceed to produce a Scheme of those Particular Ideas which, together, make up our General Idea of Perfection, it must be observ'd that Perfection or Sufficiency may be consider'd either with reference to the Being to which it belong's, or to Other Beings. Which will occasion a Two-fold Distribution of our Ideas of the Supreme or Divine Perfection.

I. 1. Our Notions of the Divine Perfection with reference to the Deity *Himself* (or his *Selfsufficiency*) are of Two Sorts; viz, either Primary or Secondary. Of the Former Sort are,

1. *Selfactivity*, or a Natural Independent Vital Principle of Action.

2. *Intelligence*, or a Perfect *Selfconsciousness*.

3. *Liberty*, or a Perfect Selfdetermining Power capable of directing and governing the Natural Activity with reference to External Action. 'Tis, I confess, the Usual Opinion that the Divine Power, in it's Full Latitude, is nothing else but a Power of *Willing*, or that with Him to *Wil* is to *Effect*. But, with all due Submission, 'tis conceiv'd that the Power of *Willing*, as it regard's External Action (of which we shal treat anon) is really no other than an Ability of Choosing a Particular Act and of Determining some Other Power to the Execution of it. And tho' we have no other Idea of the Divine Action distinct from that of *Willing*, yet Modesty will teach us to allow there may be More and more Perfect Powers and Manners of Acting than We (who derive All our Ideas of Power from Imperfect Agents) are acquainted with. And so much the rather, since our Idea of a mere Power of *Willing* is too narrow to represent the Divine Effective Power; and consequently the Use of the Word *Willing* so as to signify That Power or it's Action, rather obscure's than explain's the matter. For 'tis to Us Inconceivable how a Pure Act of *Wil* can Immediately Produce or Effect any thing. And accordingly *Vanini* reckon's it among the Frightful Difficultys which (as he thought) necessarily attend the Supposition of a God, that we must (as usual) assert his *Wil* and Effecti-

Effective Power to be the Same. But to proceed.

From these Three Primary Notions of the Divine Perfection or Sufficiency consider'd with Respect to Himself result Three Others which may be term'd Secondary ones; viz.

1. *Spirituality*. Which is a Complex Idea including the Three Primary ones.

2. *Constancy* or *Immutability*, which is an Idea resulting from that of *Spirituality* consider'd as Perfect.

3. *Happiness*. Which Idea necessarily result's from the Two Former, and together with Them constitute's our Idea of the Necessary and most Perfect Being consider'd Absolutely or in Himself.

II. 2. The Divine Perfection or Sufficiency with reference to *Other Beings* may be likewise consider'd in a Twofold Respect; either with relation to Beings merely *Possible* or *Actually existent*. In the Former Respect it yield's us Three Other Ideas, viz.

1. *Omnipotence*. An Idea resulting from that of *Selfactivity*.

2. *Wisdom*. Which Idea we derive from the consideration of his *Intelligence* or *Selfconsciousness*.

3. *Omniscience*. An Idea form'd chiefly by the consideration of his *Liberty*.

All these Ideas represent such Perfections as are usually term'd *Natural* as oppos'd to *Moral*.

Correspondently to the Three Ideas of the Divine Sufficiency with reference to Other Beings consider'd as merely Possible, there are Three Others which we derive from our considering it with respect to Other Beings as *Actually Existent*. These are.

1. *Goodness* or *Benevolence*. An Idea chiefly resulting from our Consideration of the Free Effects of *Omnipotence* in the *Creation* and *Sustentation* of the Universe.

2. *Government*. An Idea deriv'd from our View both of the Beautiful Order of the Inanimate Parts of the World and of the Regular Frame and Management of the Irrational and Intelligent: Which are Particularly to be consider'd as the Effects of the Divine *Wisdom*. To This Idea may be reduc't those of *Holiness*, *Mercy*, *Justice* and *Veracity*; which

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are alike founded on the Exercise of the Divine Wisdom in Governing the World: Since the most Perfect Wisdom must Ever be conceiv'd to incline it's Subject to Act in the Manner most Suitable to the States of his Creatures and to his Own Great End in their Creation.

3. *Providence* strictly so call'd. Which Idea we owe most Immediately to the Exercise of *Omniscience*. I say *most Immediately*; for the Wisdom and Power of the Eternal Independent Being wil appear to be likewise most brightly display'd in All his Acts of Providence. But especially the Former, which may be consider'd as the Fundamental Reason of All his External Acts.

These Three Last Ideas, with whatever Ideas they may include, denote no Particular Perfections of the Divine Nature; but are Notions form'd in our Minds by our Consideration of the Exercise of the Divine Perfections with reference to the Creatures. And These are the Ideas which represent such Attributes as are usually call'd *Moral ones*.

From these Three Ideas it is that we derive our Notion of *Omnipresence*; thô most Immediately from the First, viz. that of the Divine *Goodness* in the Creation and Sustainment of All Things.

C H A P. VII.

HAVING thus taken a View of our Ideas of the Divine or Supreme Perfection in such Order as they seem most Naturally either to be comprehended in or to result from the General Idea of Perfection, we Now proceed to consider 'em Distinctly, and to the General Demonstration already produc't shal add the Proofs of Each in Particular. Which wil likewise be as so many Additional Proofs of the Existence* of a God.

I. 1. The First Conception included in the General Idea of Perfection we have observ'd to be *Selfactivity*. Now that the Original Being is Vitally and Independently Active appear's not only from the General Idea of his Perfection, but, had we form'd no such Idea, would have been abundantly clear from the *Motion* we experience in the World, If

If we believe our Senses we can't doubt but there's such a Thing as Motion. Now'tis undeniable that This must have been either Absolutely Uncaus'd, or if in any sence Caus'd, it must have been the Effect either of Eternal Matter, or else of some Eternal Immaterial Self-active Principle.

If 'twas Absolutely Uncaus'd, it must have been an Independent Immediate Property either of All Matter, or at least of some Particular Portion or Portions of it.

If 'twas the Effect of Eternal Matter it must have been either Temporal (or with Begining) or else Eternal (or without Begining.) If *Temporal*, it must have been begun by the Action of Some Free (or Indetermin'd Elective) Principle Essential either to the Whole Material Systeme or to Some Particular Portion or Portions of it. If *Eternal*, it must have proceeded either from Some Action of Matter bent towards Some Particular Point or Points, or else from Some Action which was Absolutely Indifferent to Every Side.

All these Hypotheses wil be comprehended and explain'd under the Following Propositions.

I. 1. *The Motion we experience in the World was not Absolutely Uncaus'd or an Independent Immediate Property either of All Matter or of Any of it's Parts.*

By Matter I understand a Multitude of Solid, Movable, and Divisible Extensions having an Aptitude to Communicate Motion by Impulse. This is All we can with Certainty affirm to belong to the Nature either of the Universal Matter, or of any Particular Systeme of it; tho it may, perhaps, either have or be capable of Other Propertys.

As for Motion, 'tis a simple Idea, and therefore neither need's nor admit's Explication.

That Motion was not Absolutely Uncaus'd or an Independent Immediate Property of the Entire Systeme of Matter may appear from the Following Arguments.

First, It ha's been already prov'd that Whatever Being was Absolutely Uncaus'd must have been Simply or Absolutely Necessary, or of such a Nature that it can't without an Absolute Contradiction Cease to Be. Now, 'tis clear that This is Equally True of Whatever is Positive and

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Natural in such a Being : Since That can't but be reputed to Be with the very Same Necessity as the Nature to which it belong's. If then , the Motion of Matter (which is questionless somewhat Positive) was Natural to it and Absolutely Uncaus'd, it clearly follow's that it both Ever had and Ever wil have an Absolutely Necessary Connection with Necessarily-existent Matter. Wheteas, on the contrary, (thò it should be admitted that not a Particle in the Universe is Absolutely at Rest) 'tis certain that Matter and Motion have no such Necessary Connection with each other. As wil be shewn under the Third Proposition.

Again, If Motion was an Absolutely Necessary Immediate Property of the Entire Systeme of Matter, it follow's that it was thus Necessary to All it's Parts in the Same Degree. For, the Original Necessity being , as was prov'd, One and Uniform, or (which is the Same) All the Parts of Matter being, if Independently Eternał, Equally Necessary ; 'tis Unreasonable to imagin any One of their Property's, which could not but exist with the very Same Necessity in All , to have been Necessarily Different in Any.

But if Motion was Necessary to Every Particle of Matter in the Same Degree , 'tis clear that Every Particle of it must have mov'd alike. Both Comparative Rest and Incease of Velocity must have been Equally Impossible. A Constant Uniformity must have discover'd it's self throughout Universal Nature, and there could have been no Difference between the Motion of a Mote in the Sun-beams and that of a Whirlwind.

And then , as for the Latter Part of this Proposition, viz, *That Motion was no Independently Eternał Immediate Property of any Particular Part or Parts of Matter* ; 'tis no less Manifest from the very Same Method of arguing. For to imagin any Portion of Matter (whose Parts, and their Property's, if Eternal and Independent, existed with the very Same Absolute Necessity) should have Eternally or Necessarily possest any Property which Another Portion of it as Necessarily wanted, would be, in effect, to make the Necessity with which Matter existed to have been Different

rent while we assert it to have been the Same.

2. *Motion was not the Temporal Effect of Eternal Matter by virtue of any Free (or Indetermin'd Elective) Principle Essential either to the Whole Systeme or to any of it's Parts.*

That such a Free Principle of Action (if any such) must have been Essential to All Matter, or an Absolutely Necessary Property of the Whole Material Systeme, is clear from the Principles before establish'd. For Absolute Necessity being One and Uniform could by consequence admit of no Difference of Property's in Different Beings.

But tho' Some Atheistical Materialists have bestow'd the Property of *Intelligence* either on the Whole Systeme of Matter (as *Spinoza*) or on Every distinct Particle of it (as Mr. *Hobbes* seem's to have done) yet None ever asserted either the Whole or any Part of it to possess an Essential *Liberty* or Freedom of Action: Without which 'tis plain there could be no Beginning of Motion. And indeed (as we just now observ'd) had they been inclin'd to ascribe a Freedom of Action but to any One Part of Matter, they would have been oblig'd to attribute the Same Freedom to All: And if so, they could not have fail'd of a Confutation from Every man's Experience.

3. *Motion was not the Eternal Effect of Matter by virtue of any Action bent towards Some Particular Point.*

That an Eternal Action (if the Cause of Motion) could not but be Invariably bent to One Particular Point is clear; since the Power from whence it proceeded could not but exist and act with a Necessity which was Uniform, and which by consequence admitted of no Variety of Directions.

And tho' any should suppose the imagin'd Eternal Matter to have been Intelligent, yet this could have made no Difference. For if the Action and it's Direction (which are Both Positive Ideas) were Absolutely Necessary they could not but exclude All Selfdetermination (or the Power of differently directing the Action) from their Subject: Since whatever is Positive and Natural in an Eternal Being can't but be equally Necessary with the Being to which it belong's.

But I take it, 'tis sufficiently demonstrable that there

could be no Proper Eternal Effect of Any Cause. For since Whatever was Eternal was Necessary, and since the Necessity with which an Original Eternal Being exists is One and Uniform (as was shown) it follows that it could be no Foundation of such an Eternal Distinction as is that of Cause and Effect. For whatever Distinction was included in the Nature of Perfection This, without dispute, could not; since to be An Effect, or to be Essentially Dependent, is an Imperfection.

Notwithstanding this, Some have not fail'd to make Motion an Eternal Effect of a Suppos'd Eternal Invariable Action of Matter. Such was the *Gravitation* of the *Epicureans*. Which we shal briefly consider.

'Tis wel known to have been the Opinion of *Epicurus* and Other Ancient and Modern Materialists that Every Atom or Particle of Matter Necessarily possesse's a certain Determinate Gravity or Weight Independent on any Other Being. Which Gravity by it's Action of Gravitation they imagin'd to have been the Eternal Cause of Motion, and thereby of All the *Phænomena* or Appearances in Nature.

Concerning which Philosophers we may, in the First place, observe that Whatever Order they suppos'd between Gravitation and Motion as Imaginary Cause and Effect, they yet conceiv'd 'em to have Ever been Equally Necessary. Consequently, the Arguments we produc't under the First of these Propositions against the Necessity of Motion are of Equal Force here. But because the Epicurean Hypothesis ha's found some Entertainment in the World we shal give it a few Thoughts, and shal proceed to demonstrate that there's no such Principle as Gravity Independently and Invariably Inherent in Matter, and likewise that, supposing Gravitation to be the Action of such an Invariable Independent Principle; yet 'twas Impossible it should have been the Cause of that Variety of Motions which we experience in the World.

In order to This we may observe, in the Second Place, that 'tis Necessary for our Adversarys in the Present Argument to suppose not only the *Principle* but the *Laws* of *Gravitation* to have been Ever the Same with what is
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found at present existing in Nature. For if Gravitation was an Eternal or Necessary Action of Necessarily existent Matter, it follow's that both it's *Principle* and *Laws* (whatever they were) must *now* be Necessarily the Same. For if both the Cause and the Effects existed together with an Absolute Uniform Necessity, they can't but be Ever Inseparably connected by the Same Necessity. But to proceed to the Proofs of what we propos'd.

'Tis, I take it, past all doubt not only that the Gravitation of Bodys situate *Without* the Surface of the Earth decrease's with respect to the Centre in proportion to the *Increase* of their Distance from the *Surface*, but likewise that, on the contrary, the Gravitation of Bodys plac'd *Within* the Surface decrease's in the Same respect according to the *Decrease* of their Distance from the *Centre*. From which and divers Other Observations it ha's been sufficiently prov'd by the Great Sr *Isaak Newton*.

First, That there's a Mutual Gravitation or Tendency not only of All the Parts of our Earth but of the Nearest Heavenly Bodys, and, by consequence (as far as Our Observation reach's) of All the Parts of Matter towards each other within certain Determinate Distances.

Secondly, That the Gravitation of Bodys towards any Particular Point is either More or Less in an Exact Proportion both to their Own *Real* Quantity and to the Quantity and Distance of the Bodys towards which they tend.

How Different This Gravitation is from that Independent Inclination to *Descend* (or move towards One Particular Point) which *Epicurus* ascrib'd to Each of his Atoms is sufficiently Clear.

According to These Principles 'tis easy to conceive that (contrary to the *Vulgar* Opinion) supposing a Passage thro' the Diametre of the Earth, a Stone or any Other Ponderous Body descending would lose of it's Velocity in proportion to it's Nearer Approach to the Centre. And thus, moving stil slower according to the Decrease of it's Gravitation towards the Centre, 'twould At last remain without

any further Predominant Tendency to any Particular Point; as being surrounded by an Equal Quantity of Matter on All Sides. The like would happen to any Lesser Body moving into the Middle Space between Two or More such Bodys consisting of Equal Quantities of Matter, or into the Space between Two or More such Bodys of Unequal Quantities plac'd at a Proportionable Inequality of Distance.

But if the Gravitation of Bodys is so Variable through Variety of Situations, this is enough to demonstrate it not to proceed from any Eternal Independent Principle Essentially or Necessarily Inherent in Every Atom or Particle of Matter (since such a Principle could not but be Uniform or Alike in All Situations;) but to be a Merely Accidental Effect entirely Dependent on Somewhat External. And tho' our Modern Epicureans should choose to ascribe it to the Influence of the Other (Surrounding) Bodys rather than to the Mediate or Immediate Agency of the Eternal *Immaterial Being*, yet ev'n This would amount to a Confession that Gravitation proceed's not from any Intrinsic Property inherent in Every Particular Body, but is an Effect depending on an Unknown and Variable Influence of Other Bodys.

But admitting (according to the *Epicurean Hypothesis*) that Gravity was a Necessary, Independent, Property of Every Atom or Particle of Matter; admitting too that Matter by virtue of it's Gravitation could combine into Separate Masses, as 'tis found to be at Present; yet it may be affirm'd Impossible Gravity should have been the Cause of That Variety of Motions which we experience in Nature. For 'tis demonstrable That the Principle and Laws of Gravitation (whatever they may be) since they must of Necessity be allow'd, if Eternal, to be Uniform and Invariable, could never have been the Necessary Cause of Various and Contrary Motions: Such as may be observ'd in the Present Systeme of Things. For Instance; the Projectile Motion of Divers of the Great Bodys of the Universe tending to describe *Circles* or *Ellipses*, and the Central Motion of their Several Parts tending always to *Straight Lines*.

4. *Motion was not the Eternal Effect of Matter by virtue of any Action Absolutely Indifferent to Every Side.*

That such an Indifferently Determinable Eternal Action can't with reason be suppos'd by Any Atheist was shown under the Last Proposition, when we prov'd that such an Eternal Action as may be conceiv'd to have been the Cause of Motion, whether it's Subject was Intelligent or Unintelligent, could not but be Immutably bent toward's One and the Same Point.

But supposing such an Eternal Action as was and is Indifferent to Every Side, and supposing it (with the *Epicurean* Atheist) to have been Unintelligent, How could This have been the Cause of the Motion which we experience in the World? If we take a Considerate View of the Heavenly Bodys, we shal see with what an Exact and Constant Regularity they perform their Respective Revolutions. Ev'n the Motions of *Comets* which, til of late, have seem'd the Extravagances and Enormitys of Nature, do now appear to be Regular and reducible to such an *Ellipsis* whose Sides approach very near a *Parabola*. And the seemingly confus'd Positions and Motions of the *Planets* may be sufficiently accounted for from the Different Wideness of their Orbits; in describing which they All revolve the Same Way with the Greatest Exactness. But among These the *Moon*, the most expos'd to our View, is Particularly remarkable; whose Revolutions about the Earth and her Own Axis are so nicely adjusted that they are Both perform'd in the Same Compass of time. By which Admirable Harmony of the Two Motions it happen's that she Always present's the Same Side to our Eyes: While One Motion continually turn's her *from* the Earth and the Other *towards* it in the Same Proportion. And should we confine our Observation to the *Earth* which we inhabit, besides the Several Motions of the Entire Globe (which are no less Exact and Regular) we may observe it's Parts, as if animated by One Common Soul, Constantly and Uniformly tending towards One Common Centre. But such Constancy and such Uniformity are as Absolutely Irreconcilable to the Hypothesis of a Principle

ple of Motion which is Unintelligent and yet Indifferent to Every Side, as the Former Instances of Variety are to that of a Principle of Motion Immutably determin'd to One and the Same Point.

If, after all, Any Atheist should be so Absurd as to object that perhaps Motion was neither Absolutely Uncaus'd nor yet the Effect of any Internal Universal Active Principle Essential to Matter, but a Mere *Passion* communicated from One Part of Matter to Another in an Eternal Circulation, as *Hobbes* and *Spinoza* imagin'd; This is the most Unreasonable Supposition of Any. To prove which we shal not need to repeat what was observ'd when we demonstrated the Impossibility of the Eternity both of *Matter* and *Motion*. 'Twill be sufficient to add, That in the Case of such an Eternal Circulation there's neither any External Agent suppos'd which might be the Proper Cause of the motion, nor any Intrinsic Reason of it in the Bodys mov'd; but the Bodys are conceiv'd, in a manner purely Passive, to transfer that Motion to each other which none of 'em in particular possess with an Absolute Necessity in it's Own Nature, nor deriv'd from the Power of any Proper Agent whatever. But What is This but to suppose Motion to exist without either a Proper Cause or so much as a Reason of it's Existence? Which is Absurd.

If then the Motion of Matter be absolutely Unaccountable by any of These Hypotheses (which yet are All that the Enemy of Religion either have or can pretend or imagin) 'tis Manifest that Matter is no Originally Self-active Being, but that it's Motion must have been Begun by derivation from Some Principle Essentially distinct, or from some *Immaterial Agent* who is Necessarily-existent and, as such, Perfectly Selfactive. Of the Notion of an *Immaterial Being* we shal treat particularly in the *Appendix*.

II. 2. The Next Conception comprehended in the General Idea of the Eternal Being is *Intelligence* or *Selfconsciousness*.

This Idea we are Naturally led to by the Consideration of the Former. For of *Selfactivity* as it's a Capable Prin-

ciple of Beginning External Action we can have no Other Idea than that of *Cogitation*. But *Cogitation* and *Intelligence* are Inseparable.

By Intelligence, as importing the Same with Selfconsciousness, is meant *A Perfect Knowledge of his Own most Perfect Nature*.

That the Eternal Being was Naturally and Necessarily Intelligent or Selfconscious wil more fully appear from the Following Argument.

If Motion had a *Beginning*, (as was prov'd) 'tis evident that the Original Cause of Motion was a Selfconscious Being. For since the Eternal Being (which Alone could be the Original of Motion) can't but be what it is with an Absolute Necessity, it follow's that Nothing could Immediately qualify such a Being to Begin External Action but a Necessary (or Essential) Principle of Selfdetermination. For, without such a Selfdetermining Principle, if Eternally Unactive in This Sence, he would Necessarily or Essentially have remain'd so. But Selfdetermination or *Willing* (which is the Result of such a Selfdetermining Principle) could not be without a Preceding Perception both of the Power of Acting and of the Difference, of Acts: Since no Being can be said Voluntarily to determin a Power which it know's nothing of to an Act of which it ha's no Perception: But such Perception Necessarily imply's *Selfconsciousness*.

III. 3. Another Conception included in the General Idea of the Necessarily-existent Being is *Liberty*. By which is meant *A Perfect Freedom of External Action*.

Under the General Notion of Liberty are comprehended not only a Power of Perceiving, but also of Choosing and Determining, exempt from all External Irresistible Force and Internal Invincible Defects.

Our Idea of the Divine Liberty we are directed to form by the Consideration of the Two Preceding Ideas of the Divine Perfection. For as the Idea of Perfect *Selfactivity* exclude's the Influence of All Imaginable Force and Defects so that of a Perfect *Intelligence* as it include's a Power of Perceiving, so it infer's a Power of Choosing and Determining accordingly: Without which a mere Intelligence

An Enquiry into the Existence,
could be of no Use, and by consequence not agreeable to the Idea of the Perfect Being.

The Arguments whereby we prov'd the Selfactivity and Intelligence of the Eternal Being are no less sufficient Proofs of his Liberty. Those together with the observations of Dr. Clarke will save us the pains of adding any thing here upon this Head,

But because the Idea of Liberty admit's of some Accidental Variety according to the Diversity of it's Subjects and their States; and because 'tis no small Difficulty to determine how far it's Notion may agree to Particular Agents and Acts, we shal here attempt an Explication. And in so doing we shal, as on Other Occasions, with all Submission, take out Own Measures without following any Track but that which we conceive is made by the Foot-steps of Truth.

That we may the better apprehend the Nature of such Liberty as is agreeable to the Most Perfect of Beings, it can't be amiss First to form a Notion of such as may agree to our Selves. This we shal endeavour in the following Propositions: By which not only the Reality of Humane Liberty but it's Distinction from that of the Deity wil, 'tis conceiv'd, sufficiently appear.

1. *'Tis plain that Nothing can be denominated a Free Agent but what is furnisht not only with a Power of Perceiving, Judging, and Choosing but of Determining it's Consequent Acts according to it's Perception. Judgment, and Choice.*

2. *In order to the Completing of Liberty or Freedom 'tis necessary that the Perception, Judgment and Choice, as well as the Consequent Acts be exempt from the Immediate Irresistible Influence of any External Force.*

3. *'Tis Further necessary to the Completing of Liberty that the Perception, Judgment, Choice, and Consequent Acts be free ev'n from the Mediate Irresistible Influence of any such Force. For 'tis certain that All These may be exempt from the Immediate Influence of Any Force and yet may, at the Same Instant, be Necessitated. Thus, if a Person of a Deprav'd Imagination choose's to leap into a River, mistaking it for a Beautiful Meadow, none I suppose wil say he was Completely Free; since 'tis clear his Per-*
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ception and Judgment were under the Remote Influence, of an External Force; viz, of the Original Cause of his Distemper. And thus, a Malefactor who has Several sorts of Death propos'd to his Choice, tho his Choice be so far Free as not to be Immediately fixt to Any One Sort, yet there's stil such an External Force as Effectually, tho Remotely, determin's both his Choice and Practice.

4. *Humane Liberty can't yet be Complete without a Freedom from the Invincible Byass of All Internal Mental Defects.* For tho the Perception, Judgment, Choice and Consequent Acts be exempt from the Mediate as well as Immediate Irresistible Influence of Any External Force, yet the Choice may be far from being Completely Free. Thus, a Person of a Mean Capacity in a Case of Difficulty, wherein the *Apparent Good* is Clear and Evident to Sense but the *Real Good* is the Object of Reason only and no otherwise to be discover'd than by an Accurate Search and Laborious Deduction; tho he be not Subject to the Influence of any External Force, and tho he deliberately choose and determin his Action to the Apparent Good, yet can't be said to have been Completely Free. For his Incapacity was as Effectual an Impediment as an External Force could have been.

5. *The Several Degrees of Liberty which we have mention'd can't yet render Humane Liberty Complete, in our Imperfect State and Circumstances, without the Accession of a Liberty of Not Acting as well as of Acting ev'n after the Clearest Perception and the most Deliberate and Unbyass'd Choice.* For we find by Experience that, notwithstanding All the Requisites of Liberty already mention'd, an Imperfect Agent, like our Selves, may be in such a State that he can't be reputed Completely Free. Thus, a Person suddenly seiz'd with a Palsy and Choosing to remain where he is, tho his Stay be Voluntary and the Result of such a Perception, Choice, and Selfdetermination as no Force nor any Impediment influenc'd, yet 'tis clear that, being Paralytick, he was not Free to Remove.

This make's it appear that a Power of *Acting* or *Not Acting*, ev'n after Choice, is that which is most Essential

tial to humane Liberty in our Present State; and that our Liberty do'sn't entirely consist in a *Spontaneity* or Voluntariness as Some imagin. For what is done Voluntarily (or with Choice) may yet be as Necessary as what is done with the Greatest Reluctance. The Choice may be Necessitated by an External Force; or by an Internal Impediment; and supposing it Free, it can't Alone denominate the Agent Free. Nor can a Free Choice joyn'd with a Liberty of Determining and Executing That only which happens to be in the Agent's Power when the Contrary was Naturally as much in his Power. For if so, such a Paralytick might as wel be reputed Free as a Person who ha's the Use of his Limbs. There must therefore be a Selfdetermining Power capable of Acting or Not Acting ev'n after the Freeest Perception and Choice, with respect to Things within the Capacitys of Humane Nature.

6. *Tho Determination and Necessity (as far as they extend) be Ever Inconsistent with Liberty, yet they aren't Always Inconsistent with Perfection.* The Reason is, because Liberty is not, in Every Case, a Perfection, and because Necessity may Sometimes proceed from Perfection. For Instance, Tho, in the Cases aforementioned, viz, either of an Immediate, or Mediate Influence from Some External Agent, or of Internal Hindrance from Defects, the Determination and Necessity resulting from thence are Proofs of the Imperfection of the Subject; yet there's Another Necessity in All Intelligent Beings, proceeding from None of These Causes but purely from the (Greater or Lesser) Perfection of their Natures. And, by consequence, an Absolute Freedom from such Necessity (was it possible) would be an Imperfection. Thus, when I reflect upon what passe's in my Own Mind, I can't but observe a Necessary Inclination to Good in General (as the End of All my Actions;) and when I set my self to consider any Good or Evil in Particular in order to the Obtaining the One or Avoiding the Other, I find (if my Capacity and Means of Information be sufficient) I can't but Necessarily Judge of it as it is in Reality.

That Such Necessity as is included in These Instances is

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no Imperfection but rather a Great Perfection is, I think, Clear. For 'tis the Unavoidable Result of The Exercise of Reason; which is questionless a Perfection. And, notwithstanding such Necessity, yet the Antecedent Power we are Conscious we have, in All Ordinary Cases, of Determining or Not Determining our Thoughts to the Consideration of any Particular Object in order to Practice, joyn'd with a Subsequent Power of Deliberating, and Sometimes Varying our Judgment in Cases not Selfevident, as well as of Suspending and Varying our Approbation, Choice and Practice ev'n after the Exactest Deliberation and Truest Judgment, wil sufficiently prove that our Actions are under no Universal Fatal Determination from the Objects that affect us. I say we are Conscious of these Powers within our Selves. For I think I may appeal to any Considering Man whether he be not, in All Ordinary Cases, sensible of an Ability of Darting his Thoughts upon Any Particular Object ev'n Antecedently to any Deliberation; and then, whether, after Deliberation about Particular Objects, he can't Reassume his Deliberation, and Sometimes Vary his Judgment; and whether, after the Clearest Judgment and most Deliberate Choice of Particular Things or Actions, he be not stil conscious of a Power of Suspending his Practice, of Reassuming the Consideration of the Objects whenever he please's, or of immediately Choosing and Practising the Contrary; without being determin'd by impressions from Without or Impediments from Within. But we have no Clearer Proof ev'n of our Existence than Consciousness. And I conceive we need not expect greater Evidence of Any Thing than we have of our Existence. So that, if we duly reflect, we can't but find enough in our Minds to convince us that the Proper Spring of Action is Within our Selves, and Capable of exerting it's self by it's Own Native Force, tho' usually excited and sometimes Determin'd by Things Without us.

From what has been observ'd it appears that our Notion of Humane Liberty is then only Complete, when it include's a Perception and Judgment determin'd only by the Real Nature and Circumstances of the Object, without the Irresistible Influence either of External
Force

Force or Internal Defects ; Preceded by an Indetermin'd Ability of Considering and Deliberating, and Follow'd by a like Indetermin'd Ability either of Approving or Not Approving , Choosing or Not Choosing , Acting or Not Acting accordingly.

This Description of Humane Liberty reflect's some Light upon the Nature of *Guilt* or Obligation to Punishment ; which hereby appear's Naturally to result from the Abuse of Liberty, either in Neglecting the Possible and most Conducive Means in order to our Information Antecedently to our Judgment of any Action , or else from a like Abuse of Liberty Consequent on our Judgment, by Approving, Choosing or Practising That or a Different Action either Rashly or Obstinately. For as for the Pure Act of Judging , since 'tis Necessarily Determin'd by the Object as it appear's to Us, 'tis clear we can't be Culpable Merely on That Account.

By This it likewise appear's that Humane Liberty in it's Full Latitude, is not the Attribute of Any Particular Act, Power, or Faculty , but is the Property of the Agent or Man. For, tho' the Judgment , Approbation , Choice , and Determination to Action be exempt from the Fatal Influence of Any External Force or Internal Defect yet, if the Agent be not Capable of Not Approving, Not Choosing and Executing ev'n what is Really Best as well as of Approving, Choosing and Executing it, his Liberty of Suspending and Reassuming the Consideration of Things or Actions can't alone denominate him Free.

By the Consideration of such Liberty as is agreeable to our Selves in Our Particular State and Capacity we shal now be the better qualifi'd to form some Conception of that which is Suitable to the Idea of the Eternal Being. In order to which I think we may lay it down for a Principle , *That the Nature of Liberty in All Capable Beings is the Same , allowing only for such Accidental Diversity as may proceed from the Different States and Perfection of it's Subjects.*

Now to discover wherein the Perfection and Peculiar State of the Eternal Being may have occasion'd his Liberty to differ from that of our Selves or Other Imperfect

fect Agents, we may here recollect what we before observ'd when we discours'd of Humane Liberty; viz. That All Determination and Necessity is not Inconsistent with Perfection, but that, on the Contrary, there is Ever an Immediate Determination both of the Agent to Good in General, and of the Judgment by the Nature and Circumstances of the Objects when duly perceiv'd (under the Notion of Good) in Particular. To which we may add, what we likewise hinted before, viz. That the more Constant and Uniform the Determination ev'n of the Consequent Acts is to that which is Really Better (proceeding from an Internal Principle of Perfection and not from any External Influence) the more Perfect is the Agent's Liberty. As may hereafter appear.

Agreeably to This 'twil, it's humbly conceiv'd, be manifest that the Difference between the Liberty of the Eternal Being and that of our Selves must chiefly consist in the Constancy and Uniformity of the Determination not only of his Judgment but of All his Consequent Acts to what is Really Better. This is the undoubted Result of the Supreme Perfection of his Nature. For as where the Understanding is never deceiv'd by False Colours and 'Appearances there the Judgment can't but be Always Right, so where no Irregular Passions nor any Imaginable Impediments intervene Between the Judgment, Choice, and Execution, there All the Consequent Acts can't but be Perpetually agreeable to the Right Judgment.

The Constant Uniform Determination of the Deity with reference to his Consequent Action must be conceiv'd to discover it's self in Two Several Respects, Both in respect to his *Manner* of Acting and to Certain of his *Acts*.

First, It can't but discover it's self in his *Manner* of Acting. For Instance, the very Nature of the Perfect Being can't but Immutably determin him, when he act's, to act Wisely and Regularly. When he incline's to External Action, he can no more fail to Choose the Best End and to employ the Fittest or most Conducive Means than he can to understand 'em. For that there's a Fitness and Unfitness in the Natures or Circumstances of things will be

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undeniably clear from what shal be observ'd hereafter.

This make's it appear how the Divine Action may, notwithstanding his Liberty, proceed from a Principle as Constant and Uniform as the suppos'd Stoical Fate it's Self. And This, by consequence, show's the Necessary Connection of the Moral Attributes of the Deity (such as justice, Mercy &c.) with the Natural ones (his Selfactivity, Intelligence, Liberty &c.) in the Present State of Things. For tho' these Moral Attributes denote no Particular Perfections of the Divine Nature, but only such Relative Ideas of Our Minds as result from the Consideration of the Divine Actions with reference to our Selves and Other Beings (as wilbe shown) yet since the Natural Perfections, which are the Principles of those Divine Acts, are Immutable both in Themselves and in their Manner of Acting, we may Infallibly conclude that, whenever the Deity incline's to act, his Actions must Constantly come Under These Denominations.

'Tis to be confest that in an Agent subject to Laws, such Constant Natural Determination to the Best Method of Choosing and Practising would be Inconsistent with his State and Circumstances. For since Such a State suppose's a Possibility of the Contrary Acts, viz, of Disobedience as well as of Obedience, 'tis Clear that the Liberty which agree's to it must, ev'n after the Perception of the Obligation and Judgment of the Duty to which his Obedience is requir'd, stil include an Indetermination with reference to the Consequent Acts. For without This the Imposition of Laws as Tryals of Practice would seem Imperinent, and Rewards and Punishments could have no Place: Since 'tis manifest that wherever Rewards and Punishments take place, they must be dispens't on the account of Somewhat which was Originally in the Subjects Power either to Do or Omit.

But tho' such an Indetermination with reference to Acts consequent on the Judgment be that which is most Essential

tial to the Liberty which is Peculiar to an Agent in such Particular Circumstances as our Selves, yet it's merely Accidental to Liberty in General, and far from being *in it's Self* a Perfection.

Again, The Firmness or Immutability of the Divine Determination must be conceiv'd to discover it's Self not only with respect to the Manner of Acting, but with reference to Certain *Acts*. Thus, for Instance, since the Deity could not but be Eternally Conscious of the Perfections of his Adorable Nature (his Omnipotence, Wisdom &c.) consequently, he could not but know it was Fitter those Perfections should be exercis'd than that they should Ever remain Unemploy'd. Therefore since (as was observ'd) his Choice can't but follow his Perception of what is Fitter, and his Other Consequent Acts can't but be Ever Agreeable to his Choice, it plainly follow's that he could Never be Indetermin'd with reference to External Action. Yet this could not hinder but that his External Action, tho' proceeding from Such Determination, might be in the most Perfect Manner Free; inasmuch as 'twas no Determination from any External Force nor Internal Defect, but the Pure Result of his Own Essential Perfection, and Executed When and in such Order as it pleas'd him. For that the Eternal Being might have Created the World Millions of Ages sooner than he did is Undenyable; and that He, who was Absolutely Independent on the Creatures, might have observ'd a very Different Order in Some Respects, and yet in Sufficient Consistence with his Great Design, is not to be doubted. Since in Many Cases Different Methods are Equally Suitable and Conducive, and Different Species of Creatures may be in All Respects of Equal Finess and Capacity. So that, with reference to the Beginning, Order, and Particular Acts and Objects of Creation the Deity was (it's humbly conceiv'd) under no Original Determination; tho' with respect to the *Act of Creation in General* he appear's to have been Ever Determin'd by his Own Essential Perfection. But of This more wil be said anon.

Besides, By some Previous Act that was Completely
Free

Free we may conceive him Sometimes to contract a Consequent Immutable Determination to some Particular Future Act. For Example, In the Case of an Absolute Promise, tho' the Engagement may be Completely Free, yet the Performance, with All it's Natural Consequences, can't but become Necessary to the Deity. For that such Determination is very consistent with the Divine Liberty is manifest: Since so Perfectly Wise a Being, who is fully acquainted with the Relations and Dependency of Things, can't be conceiv'd to oblige himself to the Performance of any thing without a Particular Regard to All it's Natural and Necessary Consequences. Which make's it evident, that in such a Case, These are no less the Effects of his Liberty than the Engagement from whence they proceeded.

From what ha's been observ'd we may now be assist'd to form some Idea of the Divine Perfection with respect to Liberty by concluding, *That tho' the most Perfect of Beings was Ever Free or under no Eternal Determination to Any Particular External Act (since neither his Own Nature nor the Influence of any Other Being appear to have occasion'd such Determination;) yet his Essential Perfection may be suppos'd to have Ever determin'd him to External Action in General, and That in the Fittest and most Suitable Manner: And not only so, but that, in the Present Scene of Things, a Previous Act, to which he was in no respect Oblig'd or Determin'd, may be conceiv'd sometimes to occasion a Consequent Determination and Necessity with reference to Other Particular Acts, without prejudice to his Liberty.*

'Tis easy to remark that this Description of the Divine Liberty can't easily be reconcil'd with a Certain Current Opinion; I mean That of *Particular Eternal Decrees*. 'Twill therefore be necessary to give it a few Thoughts.

I perswade my self 'tis a matter of no great difficulty to make it appear that this Opinion ha's no Solid Foundation in *Scripture*. For as to those Texts which are usually produc't to prove the Eternity of Certain Particular Decrees, they'l perhaps appear to be Insufficient. Thus, the Texts
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which speak of *Election before the Foundation of the World*, can be of little Weight to such as think it no Necessary Article of Faith to believe that this Inferiour World was the Earliest Work of the Eternal and Omnipotent Being; and who are convinc'd that either This or any Other Part of the Universe might have been of a much Ancienter Date than it Actually is without being Eternal. And as for that Other Text which is usually produc't. 2 *Tim*: 1. 9. where Grace is said to have been giv'n *πρὸ χρόνων αἰώνων*, *Ante Tempora Seculorum*, or before the Times of Ages (as Beza render's it) I suppose Few wil doubt but the natural Sence of the Phrase is that which our English Translation assign's it, viz, *before the World began: The Times of Ages* being properly no other than the Duration of This Inferiour World, which consist's of a Succession of Ages and Generations. That This is the Genuin Interpretation may further appear by comparing *Rom*: 16, 25. with *Col*: 1, 26. In the Former Text the Apostle Speaking of the Myserie of the Gospel which was then Reveal'd, inform's us that it was hid *χρόνους αἰώνους*, *from the Times of Ages*, or *Since the World began*, as the English render's it. Agreeably to which Interpretation the Same Apostle in the Latter Text, speaking of the Same Reveal'd Myserie, call's it *The Myserie which was hid from Ages and Generations*, i: e: from the Begining of Ages and Generations or, which is the Same, *since the World began*. Which make's it most evident that This Proof can import no more to the Present Purpose than the Other we consider'd above. The like may be said of that Text where mention is made of *the Eternal Purpose* which was purpos'd in Christ *Eph*: 3, 11. *Πρόθεσις τῶν αἰώνων* or *the Purpose of Ages*, as 'tis in the Original. Which may signify either that it hath endur'd ever since the World began, or that it shal endure as long as the World continu'e's. And when the Apostle speak's of the Bloud *διαθήκης αἰώνιου*, *of the Covenant of Ages*, *Heb*: 13, 20, we need not, 'tis humbly conceiv'd, understand it in any other Sence than the Former Texts.

Nor are the Proofs of the Eternity of Particular Decrees borrow'd from *Reason* of Greater Force, tho

of Greater Subtily. Which we shal briefly consider.

First, Some have attempted a Proof of the Eternity of Particular Decrees from the suppos'd Necessity or Eternity of Certain Truths. Which reputed *Eternal Truths* are of Two sorts. Some are said to reter to the *Essences* of Things; Others to their *Existence* and *Actions*. Of the Former sort are such as These in the Mathematicks; *A Circle hath Equal Diametres*, *Two and Three are Equal to Five*; And in short, All Propositions of Any Kind whose Predicates are of the Essence of their Subjects. Of the Latter sort are All such Propositions as relate to Things or Actions not yet in Being; such as These, *The sun wil Exist*, *Socrates wil Dispute*. Which Propositions, since (as is usually imagin'd) they never begun to be True, Some are apt to conclude must have deriv'd an Eternal Verity from certain Particular Eternal Decrees.

But, First, as for such reputed Eternal Truths as concern the *Essences* of Created Things, 't wil perhaps appear that These were no Distinct, Necessary, Eternal Truths but only Particular, Contingent Determinations of This One Eternal or Necessary Truth (in which they were but Virtually included) viz, *That which is the Same is not Different*, or *Nothing can be Diverse from it's Self*. Which General Truth is the Basis or Foundation of All Science, and ha's an Immediate Connection with the Existence of the Eternal or Necessarily-existent Being, without the least Dependence on his Decree. For it Never was more Necessarily True that the Deity existed than it was that he could not be Diverse from Himself.

To prove this we may first observe that the sence of These Propositions, *a Circle hath Equal Diametres*, *Two and Three are Equal to Five*, and the like, is in it's Self Identical; and they can amount to no more than These *A Circle is nothing else but a Circle*, *Two and Three aren't different from Two and Three*. For since *a Figure with Equal Diametres* signify's the very Same with *a Circle*, and *Five* is nothing different from *Two and Three*, 'tis Manifest that in These and the like Propositions there's no Real Difference between the Extremes, and by consequence no Proper

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Relation of Equality between Subject and Property (as is usually imagin'd) but a Real and Proper Identity. For tho' These and the like Propositions add to our Knowledge by a Clearer Discovery of the Same Idea, and are therefore very different (with respect to Us) from such Other Identical Propositions wherein One and the Same Idea is affirm'd of it's Self without Distinction of Words yet (in Themselves consider'd) they are Equally Identical: Since the Idea signifi'd by the Predicate is the Same which is signifi'd by the Subject; only with This Difference, that the Predicate expresse's it more Clearly, or with Some Modification which was not Particularly exprest by the Subject.

These Propositions are therefore (in Themselves consider'd) to be lookt upon as no other than Explications of One Word by Others of the Same signification; and import no more than that what is sometimes call'd *Two and Three* may as wel be call'd *Five*, or that a *Figure with Equal Diametres* ha's been usually call'd a *Circle*; just as we say a *Cock* is *Gallus*, *Homo* is a *Common Name for All Men*. But as for any Necessary or Eternal Relation between the Ideas of *Two and Three* and of *Five*, or of a *Circle* and a *Figure with Equal Diametres*, or of a *Cock* and *Gallus*, 'tis a mere Fany. For these Terms signify the very Same Ideas; but no Idea can be said to have been Eternally related to it's Self.

So that this Argument amount's at last to no more than This, viz, That because in the General it appear's that Every Being which at any time exist's ha's of Necessity a Peculiar Nature, or is Necessarily the Same with it's Self and Distinct from All Others, theretore it was Eternally and Particularly Decreed it should be so.

But, I take it, 'tis a Ridiculous thing to imagin a Particular Eternal Decree was requisite in order to bestow a Necessary Eternal Truth on these Important Propositions, a *Circle is a Circle and not a Triangle*, *Two and Three are Five and not a Hundred*, and the like. For whatever Necessity belong's to these Truths is plainly no other than what is included in that Eternal Universal Truth we mention'd before: Which Truth (as we

observ'd) was not deriv'd from any Divine Decree, but had a Necessary Immediate Connection with the Divine Nature it's self. And as for the Particular Determinations of that Eternal Universal Truth to either to the Essence or Existence of Those or any Other Created Subjects; they were not Necessary, 'tis humbly conceiv'd, but mere Contingences. As Nothing existed Unproduc'd with an Absolute or Original Necessity but That Being for whom not to exist was a Contradiction *in it's Self*; so Nothing can with Reason be affirm'd to have been Produc'd with an Immediate Derivative Necessity but Such Beings whose Non-production was a Contradiction *to the Divine Nature*. But what particular Being or Sort of Beings dare we affirm to be of such a Nature (or so Absolutely the Best or Fittest) as that it was a Contradiction to the Divine Nature not to have produc'd it, or (which is the Same) that the Deity could not be Himself had he not Created it? 'Tis freely confest that All the Creatures of God are in Themselves Good. But we know there are Degrees of Perfection among'em, and none can say that Any exist's with All the Perfection that Omnipotence could bestow; or, by consequence, that Any (much less Every) Creature was Absolutely the Fittest the Deity could Produce. Which Reflection yield's us a sensible Demonstration of the Divine Indetermination to Particular Acts. For had the Deity been under a Natural Determination to the Production of Every Creature it must have been under the Notion of the Best and Fittest in it's Self, and then there could have been seen no Creature Inferiour in Perfection to Another, but an Universal Equality must have appear'd throughout the Frame of Nature.

And then, as for such Propositions as relate to the Existence and Actions of Things not yet in Being; such as *The sun wil exist, Socrates wil dispute*, and the like; they can't, in an *Absolute Sense*, be affirm'd to have been Necessarily or Eternally True, without begging the Question in debate or supposing those very Eternal Decrees they were design'd to prove. For if there were no such Particular Eternal Decrees, 'tis certain these Propositions must in

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an Absolute Sense have been Eternally False; inasmuch as the Existence and Actions of Particular Creatures, if not Eternally decreed, must of Themselves have been no other than pure Contingences. But the Truth of every Proposition consist's in the Conformity of the Predicate or Property with the Nature of the Subject or Thing of which it's affirm'd. Which Conformity could not be, if Necessity was Absolutely affirm'd of a Thing or Action in it's self Contingent.

There is then nothing in the Nature of this Latter sort of Propositions which can oblige us to assert they were Eternally or Necessarily True in an Absolute Sense; or that there was (as Some imagin) an Eternal Certainty of All Events. But if they were True only in a *Conditional Sense*, 'tis Manifest they were no otherwise True than as the like Propositions concerning any Particular Possible subject may be affirm'd to have been so, tho it shou'd never exist. As for Example, this Proposition, *A Centaur shal exist if it please the Deity so to decree*, was always as True as these, *The sun wil exist, or Socrates wil dispute if God so decree*. And 'tis equally clear that this Conditional Truth prove's no Particular Eternal Decrees; tho it prove's an Eternal Free Agent who Ever posselt a Sovereign Power of Decreeing, Creating, and Directing Particular Natures und Actions if and as he pleas'd.

Upon the whole, 't is easy to conclude that the *Eternal Ideal World* in which some *Platonick* Gentlemen have lately imagin'd themselves to have made such Mighty Discoverys, and which is chiefly supported by *Eternal Essences, Relations*, and *Futuritys*, is, in a more Proper Sente than can be said of the Earth, *hung upon Nothing*.

Again, Another Argument in favour of Particular Eternal Decrees is borrow'd from the Opinion of a *Particular Eternal Foreknowledge*. This, it seem's, was the Method of the *Platonists*; who appear to have been the First Introducers of that Doctrine. For they, imagining it to have been Essential to the Perfection of the Deity Eternally and Particularly to Foreknow his Creatures and All Events depending on their Existence, were probably thence dispos'd to receive the Opinion of Particular Eternal Decrees

crees as the only sufficient Hypothesis to account for such a Foreknowledge.

In reply to This, we shal here only propose it to be consider'd, whether it be not more Agreeable to the Independence and Liberty of the Eternal Being to suppose his own most Excellent Nature to have been the only Necessary Particular Object of his Knowledge; Or whether the Supposition of the Eternal or Necessary Decrees and Foreknowledge of the Particular Creatures and All their Actions can be maintain'd without asserting not only All the Particular Creatures but All their Actions to be in their Own Natures such as the Deity could not have omitted to Decree and Foreknow in consistence with his Perfection and Happiness.

There is yet Another Proof of Eternal Decrees attempted from the Opinion of *an Instantaneous Eternity and the Absolute Immutability of the Divine Action*. But the Absurdity of This is generally confest, and wil be detected in the *Chap: of Eternity B: 2.*

We have the longer insisted on this Opinion of Particular Eternal Decrees because of the Impure Consequences with which we humbly conceive it has desil'd the Innocence of the Christian Religion: Which, as they depend on it, must necessarily fall with it. For if there were no Eternal Decrees of Particular Creatures and Events, then.

First, the Absolute *Predestination* of All Persons and Events from Eternity must be rejected. And no sufficient Reason wil appear for asserting such a Predestination of a Later Date. Consequently, That Particular Immediate Determining *Concourse* of God to the Worst of Actions, since 'twas chiefly invented wick design to render those suppos'd Decrees effectual, wil perhaps appear to be an Unnecessary Doctrine; and thereby both the Justice of God and the Liberty and Accountableness of the Creatures wil obtain a Sufficient Vindication. Without which whatever Arguments we may employ to Convince Men of Atheistick Principles that it's a thing very desirable there should be a God, wil, I doubt, be of very little effect. For certainly it is not the Idea of a most Intelligent and

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Wise Being freely determining himself to Acts of Goodness and Justice which fright's such Persons ; but much rather That of such a Being as These Opinions represent the Deity to be. Opinions far less Pious than the Fate of the *Stoicks*; as obliging their Assertors (at least Indirectly and by Consequence) to make the Best of Beings Author of the Worst of Actions and Events ; which to avoid , those Pagans rather chose to lay the blame on I know not what Independent Uncontrollable *Destiny*.

CH A P. VIII.

THE Secondary Notions of the Perfection of God considered with reference to Himself we have observ'd to be.

I. 1. *Spirituality*. Men have generally agree'd to express their Idea of the Best and Noblest of Beings by the Word *Spirit*. A Metaphor taken from the *Air* or *Wind*, than which, by reason of it's Tenuity , perpetual Agitation , and wide Expansion , nothing seem's more proper to represent that Invisible Nature, which Pervade's, Actuate's, and Comprehends All Things, Which Invisible Nature , tho' to nothing so fully resembl'd as to the Air (which of All the Portions of Matter is the least obnoxious to sense) yet ha's been usually conceiv'd as distinct from the most refin'd Matter , and as including the Three Property's already demonstrated, of which Matter was generally Suppos'd to be Naturally destitute; viz.

1. *Selfactivity*. Thus *Thales* , *Pythagoras* , *Plato*, and Others, according to the Philosophy of the Eastern Nations , asserted Two Principles, The one Active and Spiritual, the Other Passive and Material.

2. *Intelligence*. Say's *Posidonius* in *Stob*: ὁ Θεὸς ἔστι Πνεῦμα Νοερὸν , *God is an Intelligent Spirit*. To signify This they were wont to give him the Titles of Νοῦς and Δαίμων. Both which import Consciousness and Perception.

3. *Liberty*. Tho' some of the Philosophers suppos'd the Deity to be subject to the Influence of Fate , yet the ἴλως of

of Orpheus; the ὕδωρ of Thales, the ὕλη of Pythagoras and Plato, and the ἀπειρον of Anaxagoras (by which Terms they usually signifi'd the Material Principle of the Universe) are aliways describ'd as Void of Liberty or Selfdetermining Power; which they suppos'd to be only in the Νόος or Mind, which both imprest and regulated their Motions.

II. 2. Another Secondary Notion of the Perfection of God consider'd with reference to Himself, is *Constancy* or *Immutability*. Which we conceive is to be affirm'd both with reference to his *Nature* and *Action*.

1. With reference to his *Nature*. The Spring of Inconstancy or Mutability in This Respect must be either some Necessary Internal Principle of Corruption, or his Own Wil, or else some External Cause. But the First of these is absolutely inconsistent with his Perfect Vital Selfactivity, the Second with his Perfect Intelligence, and the Third with the Perfection of his Liberty.

2. With respect to his *Actions*. In treating of the Divine Actions we may, it's conceiv'd, lay it down as an Infalible Principle *That we can't be any farther oblig'd to assert their Immutability than as it appears to have a Necessary Connection with the Immutability of the Divine Nature*.

The Divine Actions may be consider'd either as Essential or as Unessential. The Former, because they flow immediately from the Divine Nature, can't but be Immutable in the same sense as the Nature it's self. The Latter (which we humbly conceive to have had no Necessary Connection with the Divine Nature) are of Two sorts; viz, either his Particular Decrees, or their Executions. By his Constancy or Immutability with reference to Both These, 'tis suppos'd we need not understand (as Some have done) his always Decreeing and Executing the Same Things; but his always Decreeing Ends suitable to his Nature, and his steady Pursuit and Infalible Attainment of those Ends: Both which evidently imply Perfection, and result from the Absolute Constancy or Immutability of his Nature. For as for the Difference or Variety of Particular Acts and of his Knowledge consequent thereupon, 'tis, it's humbly conceiv'd, very consistent with the Im-

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mutability of his Nature. For the Constancy or Immutability of his Nature infer's no Immutability or Invariableness of These Actions, but rather the quite Contrary: Since their Variety must be conceiv'd Immediately to proceed from the Various Exercise of his Liberty which (in All Indifferent Cases) is the Result of the Immutable Perfection of his Nature.

And as for the Actions of the Creatures, and All other Events depending on their Existence; they are alike incapable of causing any Change in his Knowledge inconsistent with his Perfection and the Immutability of his Nature. On the Contrary, 'tis Manifestly a point of Perfection to know things as they Really are; which yet can't be without Some Variation in the Manner of Knowledge answerable to the Variation of the state of it's Objects.

III. 3 Another Secondary Notion of the Perfection of the Deity consider'd with respect to Himself is *Happiness*. This Idea is the Necessary Result of All our Other Conceptions of the Eternal Being Absolutely consider'd. For a Being which Essentially and Independently possess's a Perfect Selfactivity, Intelligence and Liberty (to which Three Ideas All our Conceptions of the Divine Internal Attributes appear to be reducible) joyn'd with a Just Reflection upon and Valuation of 'em, can't but be Completely Happy.

All Real Happiness arise's from a certain Complacence in the Possession, Hope, or Expectation of Some Good. Which Complacence is ever Proportionate either to the Intrinsic Worth or, at least, to the Estimation of that Good in the Mind of it's Subject. From which 'tis evident that That only can be a Completely Happy Being which both Possesse's a Perfect and Permanent Good, and whose Opinion of it is ever agreeable to it's Real Worth.

As it Hence appear's that the Deity can't but be a Perfectly Happy Being, so it's no less clear that Himself is the only Reason of his Complacence and Happiness; for asmuch as his Own Nature alone comprehend's whatever is Good and Valuable. For since (as will be shown hereafter) whatever else exist's could have no other Real.

Worth but what it deriv'd from the Eternal and most Perfect Being; 'tis Manifest that Whatever Good is found in any Other Nature can no otherwise please him than as a Communication from Himself. Which Pleasure can no more increase his Essential Happiness than the Reflection of a Ray can add to the Lustre of the Sun.

The *Epicureans* were so far from imagining that their Deitys could receive any Accession to their Happiness by concerning themselves with Beings of an Inferiour Rank, that they thought it too Mean an Employment and a Fatigue inconsistent with that Repose which they conceiv'd to be the Chief Ingredient of Happiness. Wherefore, in pure Civility, they banisht 'em out of the World (pretending that it yielded no Place worthy of their Residence) and seated'em in certain Ultramundane Spaces, there to live in Uninterrupted Pleasure, and neither to trouble Themselves nor Others by a too officious Intermeddling with Humane Affairs. Their Seats the Poët thus describes.

*Quas nequè concutiunt Venti, nequè Nubila Nimbis,
Aspergunt, nequè Nix acri concreta Pruinâ,
Cana cadens violat, semperque innubilis Æther,
Integrit, & large Diffuso Lumine ridet.*

- - - - - And Happy Seats
Which Storm or violent Tempest never beat's,
Nor Snow invade's, but with the purest Air.
And gawdy Light diffus'd, look gay and fair.

CREECH.

Thus those Philosophers were us'd to conceive of their fictitious Deitys; if, at least, it be not a Disparagement to that Honourable Character to call Those *Philosophers* who (tho we should in Charity suppose'em to have believ'd such Divine Beings yet) like the Vulgar, fram'd'em after their Own Model. For tho it must be own'd that these men

men have rightly plac'd Happiness in the *Tranquillity of the Mind*, yet in This they were deceiv'd, when they suppos'd that such Tranquillity was Absolutely Inconsistent with External Action in such a Being as the Deity. How Mean and Unphilosophical was it to imagin that Perfect Power should be subject to Fatigue, or that the most Perfect Understanding should be Perplext and Discompos'd by too much Application and Solitude! This was, in effect, to mingle the Two Extremes, and to level the Noblest with the Basest of Beings: Those Natures being ever the least Perfect which are the least Capable of and propense to Action.

From All This the General Conclusion is, That as Nothing in any of the Interior Beings is capable of making any Addition to the Happiness of the Deity (which can only result from the Consciousness of his Own Essential Perfection) so his Creating such Beings and Caring for'em when Created can be no Diminution of it.

CHAP. IX.

WE now proceed to consider our Ideas of the Divine Perfection or Sufficiency with reference to Other Beings as *merely Possible*.

I. The First of These we observ'd to be *Omnipotence* or Perfect Effective Power. By this, 'tis humbly conceiv'd can be meant no more than *An Ability to do Whatever is consistent in it's Self and agreeable to the Divine Nature*. For to extend it farther would be in effect to ascribe to the Deity a Power of Causing a Thing both to Be and Not to Be at the Same Time and in the Same Sense (for All Contradictions are reducible to That;) or, which is all one, a Power of Effecting *a Substantial Nothing*.

The Proper Action of Perfect Effective Power wil appear to have a Twofold Notion; viz, either of *Creation* or of *Sustentation*.

By the Former of These is meant the Production of a Thing that Before was not. By the Latter we understand

stand the Preserving or Continuing a Thing in it's Existence.

In order to prove that the True Idea of the Divine Sufficiency extend's it's self to Beings distinct from it's Subject and that it, by consequence, include's the Idea of what we call *Creative Power*, we need not (here) demonstrate that there ha's Actually been a Creation. 'Twil be sufficient to prove Creation in it's Self a Possibility. For, if this can be set in a clear Light, 'twil evidently appear that Creative Power can't but belong to the Eternal and most Perfect Being.

Neither is it necessary in order to a Proof of the Possibility of a Creation to undertake to explain the Manner of it, or to reduce it's Idea to a level with Our Understandings. 'Tis sufficient to rescue it from the Charge of Contradiction and Absurdity. For, I take it, 'tis universally agreed that Perfect Power may extend to Any thing on this side a Contradiction.

Tho' we want not Variety of Proofs of the Novity of the Universe consider'd in it's Present *Form* (such as are deriv'd from the Nature of Succession, the late Invention of Arts universally useful, the Gradual Increase of Mankind and Other Animals &c.) the Evidence of which was sufficient to oblige such Philosophers as preceded *Aristotle* almost universally to attribute the Present *Frame* of Things either to the Free Agency of a Powerful and most Intelligent Being, or else to a Casual Hit or lucky Combination of Atoms; yet it seem's to have been the Opinion of the more Ancient Greeks that the *Matter* of the Universe was Eternal, Necessary and Independent. This Perswasion appears to have been grounded on their Observation of the Present Course of Nature and Art; according to which whatever is produc't is made out of Preëxistent Materials. From hence it was that they concluded it absurd to imagin that any thing should (as they wrongly exprest it) either spring out of Nothing or be reduc't to Nothing.

But it's worth observing that the Philosophers who could not in the Cause of a Deity raise their Conceptions above the Vulgar Level yet, when they came to reason on the Contrary Hypothesis, were, Many of 'em, Extravagant and

and Phantastick enough. Those very Gentlemen who were so carefull to avoid an Absurdity (as they would fain have had it accounted) when on the side of Religion, were not so scrupulous in the Defence of Atheism. For rather than suppose this Noble Frame of the World to have been the Creature of a Perfectly Powerful and Intelligent Cause, they chose to father it on Chance, and to turn the most Serious Affair into a Game at Hazard. Rather than own their Relation to the Greatest and Best of Beings they chose to level themselves with the Brutes, to imagin that, like Insects, they were originally begotten by the Sun's heat and sprung from Pimples and Tumours of the Earth. They could easily derive Liberty from Necessity, Beauty from Deformity, Harmony from Discord by a mere Chance, or (which is all one) without any Determining Cause at all. But to Create the Minuteest Thing in Nature must, in their Opinion, pass for Absolutely Impossible. And why? but because they had never seen an Instance of that Kind. They could sometimes indeed believe as strongly as any Others; but here they desir'd to be Excus'd, and could not think themselves oblig'd to believe a Creation because they weren't admitted to be Witnesses of the Work! They never had seen the Birth of the least Dust or Atom; how then could they imagin a *Generation* of the Universe*! They never could observe an Artificer to make any Piece of Workmanship without his *Materials*, without his *Instruments*; how then could they conceive the Vast Body of the Sun, the Innumerable Stars, the Massy Rocks and Mountains to have been the Effects of Art! *What Instruments, what Engins, what Force (said they) was sufficient for so Great a Work!*

*Ocellus and others contend that there's no Production but by Generation.

This Method of Reasoning is very like the Arguings of a Man bred in the Dark disputing against the Possibility of Sight. Should such a Person be told that there's a Place in the World where, if he came, he should need only to open his Eyes and be immediately and distinctly sensible of an almost Infinite Variety of Objects, each vastly Bigger than Himself, and Many of'em at very remote Distances; Would not such a Story as This appear

to Him as Incredible as that of a Creation from Nothing? Might he not, with Equal Reason, argue against the Possibility of such a Relation from the very Principles those Philosophers made use of against such a Creation? As yet, might he say, I've been sensible of but very few Objects at once, and those such as I'm assur'd could not exceed the Dimensions of my own Body, and whose Distance was, for the most part, no greater than the length of my Arm or Staff. And as for such Others as I've perceiv'd at a Remoter Distance, they have been either Single, or, if More, extreamly Confus'd and Indistinct. What Magick must there be in my Eyes, that so Little Members should be capable of conveying the Distinct Resemblances of so Great Variety of Bulky Objects at once? If it be reply'd, that the Eyes don't perform this alone, but with the help of a certain Instrument call'd *Light*; yet What Idea could such a Person have of *Light* different from that of his Staff? And what Inducement could such an Idea be to him to acknowledge That to be Possible which, by Arguments deriv'd from his Own Experience, he had before rejected as Absurd and Incredible?

But tho' such a Person, if he (with those Philosophers) resolve to admit nothing for Truth or Possibility but what is agreeable to his Own Experience of Things and upon a level with the Ideas of his Own Mind, must remain under a Necessity of disbelieving all the Reports he hear's of Sight and Colours, yet We, who have had the Use of our Eyes, shal never, I suppose, be perswaded to be of his Opinion.

This ought to convince us that there may be Possibilities in the Nature of Things of which we are as Incapable of forming Ideas as such a Person would be of forming the Idea of the Possibility of Sight. And Why may not a Power of Creating be such a Possibility? Why may not He Create from Nothing whose Essence and Action depend on Nothing? We need only take a View of our Selves to find Instances of such Powers and Manners of Acting as are Inconceivable to Us. It can't be deny'd that we Perceive, we Consider and Reflect, we Confute and De-

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monstrate; yet we may as well conceive the Creation of the Universe as the Production of a Single Thought. Our Feet practise all the Steps of a Dance, our Fingers readily perform their Parts at a Musical Confort; and yet, I doubt we are no better acquainted with the Nature and Action of the Power which Impresse's and Govern's their Motion than with That which Regulate's the Courses of the Stars. But if we so little understand such Powers and Actions of our Own as don't come under the Immediate Notice of our External Senses, ought we to think it strange that we can't comprehend the Action of a Being so much Superiour to our Selves, and whose Nature so vastly transcend's the Capacity of our Weak and Imperfect Minds?

We can't comprehend by what sort of Power God Move's Matter; and need we wonder that we can form no Idea of the Power by which he Created it? Our Imaginations have no other Materials to work on in forming an Idea of the Original Power but such as they derive from the Objects we daily converse with. But may not a Person who ha's an Icterism in his Eyes with as much Reason contend that there's no other Colour but Yellow, as We, who are so little acquainted with the World, that there's no Nobler Manner of Acting than such as our Narrow Experience inform's us of?

But Some may, perhaps, object that a Production from Nothing is not only Inconceivable but Contradictory.

Before we reply 'twil be fit to premise, That it's a very wrong Notion of Creation to imagin it to be the Production of a Thing from Nothing as from a *Material Cause*. Our Definition of it is no other than *The Production of a Thing which before was not*.

This being duly consider'd, I would ask the Objectors Wherein the Nature of a Contradiction consist's. Is it not in at once Affirming and Denying Somewhat of the Same Subject in the Same Manner? But what is there like This in the Supposition of a Creation? I confess,
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if any man could be found so Absolutely Stupid and Void of Understanding as to affirm that the Deity in Creating the World had either produc't it out of Nothing as out of a Preëxistent Subject, or had caus'd it both to Be and not to Be, to be Something and Nothing at the Same Time, such a Notion of it might have some Right to the Character of a Contradiction. But since by Creation there can no more be meant than the Causing to Be what was not *before*, or the Producing Something where *once* was Nothing, this is evidently no more a Contradiction than what we perceive to be done every day; I mean the Production of New Motions by the Mind: Which is likewise a sort of Creation.

But if the *Notion* of Creation is no Contradiction, then the *Act* of Creation (however Inconceivable to Us the Manner of it may be) cannot but be a Possibility; or it must necessarily come within the Compass of that Power which we have already prov'd to be Perfect. For it's impossible any Power should be Perfect if there be any thing, not implying a Contradiction, which it cannot do.

The Other Idea of the Action of such Effective Power as is included in our Conception of the Sufficiency of the Necessary Being with reference to Other Beings consider'd as Possible is *Sustentation*. I take it to be undeniable that a mere Causing a Thing to Be, can't infer a Necessity of it's Continuance in Being. If the Creation of any Being should import a Necessity of it's Future Continuance, that Necessity must either proceed from the Nature of the Creature, or else it must flow from either the Nature or the Decree of the Creator. Not from the Nature of the Creature. For then 'twou'd be impossible ev'n to That Power to Annihilate it which at first Produc't it. Nor from the Nature of the Creator. For no Essential Perfection of the Eternal Omnipotent Being can be imagin'd to infer the Necessity of a Creature's Continuance to Eternity but what must be conceiv'd to have equally infer'd a Necessity of it's Production from Eternity. Nor lastly, can it proceed merely from the Decree of the Creator. For the Decrees of the Supreme Being can
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have no Effect unless put in Execution. But they can't be put in Execution without Power. And, if not without Power, then the Exercise of That Power can be no less than what is meant by the Act of Sustentation.

From the Nature of Sustentation 'tis easy to collect what must be the True Notion of *Annihilation*. For if a Creature can't be conceiv'd to have any Natural Aptitude to Continue rather than to Cease to Be, but must be suppos'd to Subsist entirely by a Dependence on the Power which Originally produc't it; then there can be no necessity to imagin any Positive Influx of Power to destroy it. 'Tis sufficient to suppose a Suspension of the Influence on which it depended.

The Acts of Creation and Sustentation we term'd *the Proper Acts of Omnipotence*. For the Power which is capable of These can't but be equally capable of All Others on this side a Contradiction: There being no imaginable Degrees of Power between the Producing or Continuing that Substance which was not, and the Causing a Thing both to Be and not Be at once.

II. 2. The next Conception of Sufficiency with reference to *Possible* Effects is that of *Wisdom*. Whereby is (here) to be understood a *Perfect Ability to Dispose and Regulate in order to the most effectual Attainment of the Best Ends*. In which Idea is not only included Simple Intelligence, but whatever Other Ideas have a relation to it: Such as Imagination, Memory, and Judgment. All which are hereby asserted to belong to the Deity; but in a manner agreeable to his Perfection.

A Being capable of Creating no other than a *Chaos* or Disorderly Heap of Rubbish, without the Power of Contriving or Disposing it so as might be conducive to some Valuable End, could have no Just Claim to the Character of a Sufficient Creator. Effective Power, singly consider'd, can supply only the Gross Materials, and impress a Rude Unbyass'd Motion. And therefore to conceive a Creator without Contrivance and Design is to sink his Character below that of an Ordinary Artificer. Such a Being could be no way superiour to one of *Epicurus's* Insignificant Deitys, and might e'ne as wel fit

an Idle Spectator of the dancing Atoms as be any farther concern'd in the Work.

Nor could Omnipotence joyn'd with Contrivance and Design be enough to furnish the Notion of a Complete Creator without the Supposition of a Superintending and Regulating Power : Which make's the Other Part of our Notion of Wisdom. Without such a Power the Creator's Designs would be subject to the hazard of a Defeat, and his Creatures might fail of reaching their respective Ends. Which would be no way reconcilable to the Idea of Sufficiency.

But the Divine Essential Wisdom and it's Perfection is not only clear from the General Idea of Perfection or Sufficiency, but may be demonstrated from the Particular Perfections already discover'd. For since the Deity was Ever a Perfectly Selfconscious, Free, and Omnipotent Being (as was prov'd) he could not but Ever fully comprehend not Only his Own Particular Nature and Action, but, in the General, the Nature and Action of whatever was Produci- ble. By consequence, he could not but know whatever might at any time become Fit or Unfit, Agreeable or Disagreeable either to his Own or any Other Nature or Action; and so could not but possess a Perfect Ability both to judge of and to propose the Best End, and to choose and employ the most Effectual Means upon All Occasions. Which is the Complete Notion of Wisdom.

III. 3. Another undoubted Perfection of the Eternal Being with respect to Other Beings consider'd as Possible is that of *Omniscience*. The Demonstration of This ha's been already produc'd in the Proof we just now gave of the Divine Wisdom. For the Ideas of Wisdom and Knowledge, as Essential to the Deity, have a near Affinity to each other : Wisdom being no other than his Knowledge consider'd with reference to Practice. Wherefore that which shal here be added concerning Omniscience will refer only to the Idea which it's humbly conceiv'd we ought to form of it as Natural to the Deity.

The General Sufficiency of the Divine Nature ha's taught:

taught us that Omniscience as well as All it's Other Perfections ought to be consider'd as Natural or Essential to it. But the same Sufficiency may instrnct us not to conceive any Essential Perfection of the Deity with a Proper Original Dependence on Other Beings For that Being can't be Selfsufficient whose Essence is Properly Dependent on Another.

It seem's then to have been so far from an Imperfection in the Eternal Being to have been Himself the Only Particular Object of his Essential Perception or Knowledge, that the Contrary Supposition would debase his Idea and prove Injurious to his Perfection. The Evidence of This may be seen ev'n in our Selves. If we find our selves improv'd or advantag'd by our Acquaintance with Other Beings, this yield's an Infallible Proof of our Natural Poverty and Insufficiency. 'Tis the Imperfection and Dependence of our Natures which give's us a Propension to seek our Happiness beyond our Selves. Whereas to the Perfect Being, the Consciousness of his Own Essential Propertys could not but be a Sufficient Spring of Complacence and Satisfaction. To think otherwise would be, in effect, to suppose the Fountain to be fed by it's Own Streams, or the Sun to be enlighten'd by it's Own Rays.

These Reflections seem to make it evident that whoever wil form a Suitable Idea of the Essential Omniscience of the most Perfect of Beings ought to consider it without regard to any Particular Future Objects. For thô such a Being as was Naturally and Perfectly Conscious of his own Essential Activity (the Immediate Source of All Other Beings) could not but Ever have a most Perfect Knowledge of the Utmost Extent of Possibility, yet this might very wel be without any Necessary Determination to Particular Effects. And thô the Perfection of his Nature could not but incline him to External Action in the General (as to what was more Fit and Agreeable than it's Contrary) yet That Perfection can't it's humbly conceiv'd, have necessarily determin'd him to any certain External Act in Particular; since no

Particular Act or Object can be said to have been Absolutely Best or Fittest. But if such Determination could not necessarily proceed from his Essential Perfection, it follow's that it could have proceeded from no Other Original but Imperfection and Dependence; which the Nature of the Eternal Being we are, assur'd could never admit.

And tho' the Particular Decrees of the Great Creator and the Existence and Actions of the Creatures consequent thereupon, must be conceiv'd to have necessarily inter'd a new Modification of the Divine Knowledge, yet This can import no Dependence. For such Necessity proceeded not originally from the Natures or Existence of the Creatures, but from the Liberty and Omnipotence of the Creator.

Much less could that Knowledge which the Deity Ever had of the Future Existence of Creatures in General inter any Dependence; since it must be likewise conceiv'd as entirely proceeding from his Essential Perfection without the least reference to, much less Dependence on, any Particular Objects. For notwithstanding such Foreknowledge, Any Particular Being might either have existed or not existed according to his Sovereign Pleasure.

CHAP X.

WE come now to such Ideas of the Divine Perfection as we derive from the Consideration of Other Beings as *Actually Existent*: Which Ideas denote no Particular Perfections of the Divine Nature, but only those of it's Actions.

I. 1. The First of These we have observ'd to be *Goodness* or Benevolence: Which, together with Government and Providence, yield's us a more Sensible Proof of the Truth of all our Former Ideas of God.

The Word *Goodness* may be taken either in a *Metaphysical* Sense, viz, as it denote's the same with the General Per-

Perfection of the Divine Nature, or else in a *Moral Sense*, so as to signify an Idea of our Minds deriv'd from the Consideration of the Exercise of certain Particular Perfections of that Adorable Nature with reference to Other Beings. And 'tis in this Latter Sense we take it here.

By *Goodness* in this Sense we understand *the Free Determination and Exercise of the Divine Wisdom and Power in Creating and Sustaining the World for the Wiseest and Best of Ends.*

That Crèation and Sustainment, consider'd *with reference to the Deity*, are reputed Acts of Goodness proceed's from hence, that they are conceiv'd to have deriv'd from the Perfection of the Divine Nature without any Constraint or the least Determination from any thing External.

Had the Deity Created and Sustain'd the World by an *External Necessity* as the *Stoicks* imagin'd, it must be confess'd he would have been as far from coming under the Denomination of Good or Benevolent as any Instrument in the hand of an Architect.

But if we only suppose the Reasons for Creating and stil Sustaining a World were such and so clearly perceiv'd by the Divine Intellect that the Deity was never Indetermin'd in that respect, nor could have omitted it in consistence with his Own *Internal Perfections*; the Case must be allow'd to be very Different. By This Supposition both the Liberty and Goodness of the Great Creator are sufficiently secur'd; as we observ'd when we treated of Liberty.

And that All the Acts of the Deity, consider'd *in Themselves and their Relations*, must need's come under the Notion of Goodness, may be firmly demonstrated from our General Idea of his Perfection. For being Completely Sufficient and Independently Happy, he could have no Possible Temptation to Evil: Since That could only proceed either from Natural Imperfection or from Depravation; from Both which the Selfsufficient Being was Eternally remov'd. To imagin that the Great Creator

could act either for no End at all, or for a Chief End that was either Evil, or less Good, or Indifferent, is to suppose that the most Perfect Wisdom could act Imperfectly, i: e., Unwisely without the least imaginable Byas or Temptation.

By what ha's been observ'd it appear's, by the way, that Goodness, as it agree's to the Idea of God, can properly be no other than the Free or Unconstrain'd Determination and Exercise of his Wisdom and Omnipotence, as regulated by that Original Fitness and Unfitness which is either in the Nature or Circumstances of Things and Actions without Dependence on Positive Institution. For that there is such an Original Fitness and Unfitness in the Ideas and Relations of Some Things and Actions must be confest; unless we wil say that it was as Fit for the Deity either to have Created no Inhabitants of this Noble Structure of the World, or else Inhabitants neither Capable of relishing the Pleasure which it's Furniture could afford, nor of thanking and praising him for it, as to have Created such a Being as Man, a Being equally capable of Both.

But to demonstrate that the Deity ha's indeed acted according to the most Perfect Notion of Goodness, it remain's that we Directly prove there ha's actually been a Creation, which we before prov'd to be Possible: Or that this Vast, Orderly, and Beautiful Scene of Things was the Work of that Allwise, Free, and Omnipotent Being; who, tho' Indigent of no Other Being, ha's giv'n Existence and a Possibility of Happiness to Beings Innumerable.

Now, This it's humbly conceiv'd is a Necessary Inference from the Observation of the World, compar'd with the Rational Principles establish'd in the Begining of this Enquiry. For if we take a Considerate View of Things, we shal easily perceive that in All that Beautiful and Surprizing Variety of Beings with which we are acquainted there's None can lay a just Claim to so High a Privilege as that of an Absolute Necessity of Existence. The far Greater Part are evidently Void of Life, Understanding,

Liberty, and such Other Perfections as we have found our selves oblig'd to ascribe to a Being that Necessarily exist's. And as for our Selves and Others who have some Faint Resemblances of those Perfections; our Mutability and Absolute Incapacity of securing to our selves the Possession of 'em, are Infallible Proofs that we can claim no Right to 'em through an Absolute Necessity. But if not through an Absolute Necessity, then it can be only by virtue of the Causality of Some Original Superiour Power; which, as we formerly prov'd, could be no less than Omnipotence; and That could Originally reside in None but the Eternal Being, whose Existence is Absolutely Necessary, and who by consequence possesse's All Possible Perfections.

And that the Divine Goodness ha's not only discover'd it's self in the Creation of the Universe, but is stil no less concern'd in Sustaining and Preserving it, is equally certain. 'Tis clear from what we before observ'd that a Creature can't subsist with an Absolute Independence. To exist thus Independently is to exist Necessarily in the most Absolute Sense. But Absolute Necessity of Existence is by no means agreeable to the Idea of a Creature. Wherefore since the Creatures continue to exist, it can be only by the Favour and Goodness of that Omnipotent and most Beneficent Being which at first produc't 'em.

But if the Universe was at first Created and is stil Sustain'd and Preserv'd by no less than an Almighty Power, this instruct's us in the Idea we ought to form of the *Greatness* as well as Goodness of that Eternal Nature which is the Subject of that Power. For, since Nothing can without a Contradiction be said to Act Immediately on what is at a Distance, 'tis clear that such a Proper Universal Sustentation (which could be the Original Effect of Nothing but the Eternal Independent Being) can't be suppos'd without an Universal Intimate *Penetration* and *Omnipresence*.

The Supposition of Such a Penetration can't reasonably be suspected to be Inconsistent with that Substantial Dis-

stinction which is Necessary to be asserted between the Creator and his Creatures. For the Creatures may, notwithstanding, very well be Distinct Beings and Substances, inasmuch as they are not only, for the most part, entirely destitute of such Perfections as we have discover'd in the Deity (being *Unactive*, *Unintelligent*, and *Unelective*) but are, in the General, the Ultimate Subjects of Some or Other Property which (as including Imperfection) can't but be Incompatible to Him; such as *Mobility*, *Divisibility* &c.

If indeed, with *Spinoza*, we will needs confine our selves to the Strictest Notion of *Substance*, and allow it to agree to nothing but what is Absolutely Independent, we must then, with Him, banish All Real Distinction of Beings out of the World, and assert but One Substance or Real Being; and must, by consequence, allow that there's no other Deity but the Material Universe. But since, on the contrary, we are assur'd that, besides the Original or Independent Being, there are Subjects of Attributes not only very Different but Contrary to His (such as we mention'd above;) consequently as we must, notwithstanding the most Intimate Penetration, assert an Immutable Distinction between Them and the Independent Being, so we may in the Larger and no less Proper Sense, allow the Title of *Substance* to Both. For to be the Ultimate Subjects of Peculiar Attributes is, according to the Original Signification of the Word, to be *Distinct Substances*. Which make's it clear that *Spinoza* do's no more than beg the Whole Question in debate when in the Beginning of his Demonstrations he suppose's so Dogmatically and without the least Proof that nothing is Properly a Substance but what is Absolutely Independent; or, as he expresse's it, * *What exist's in it's Self, and is conceiv'd by it's Self, or whose Conception do'sn't need or require the Conception of any Other Thing in order to it's being form'd.* Which he after-

* *Per Substantiam intelligo quod in se est & per se concipitur; hoc est, id cujus Conceptus non indiget Conceptu alterius rei a quo formari debeat.* Spin. in Eth. P. 1. Def. 3.

afterwards explain's when he tell's us, 'Tis the very Nature of Substance to exist, or it's Essence necessarily include's Existence. * And yet 'tis on this too Strait Definition of Substance, together with the Supposition of the Absolute Infinity of Extension, and an Absolute Material Plenum (both which We conceive will be likewise sufficiently confuted in the Second Part of this Enquiry) that the Main Demonstrations of Spinoza's Divinity are built.

* *Ad Naturam Substantia pertinet existere; hoc est, ipsius Essentia involvit necessariò Existentiám. Id. Prop. 7.*

CHAP. XI.

II. **T**HE next Idea of the Divine Sufficiency or Perfection with reference to Other Beings as *Actually Existent* is deriv'd from the Visible Effects of Wisdom to be observ'd in the World, and may, perhaps, not unfitly be exprest by the Word *Government*. Under which we shal crave Liberty to comprehend *All the Effects of the Wisdom of the Omnipotent Being as governing or moderating his own Activity both in Proposing his Ends and in Disposing and Managing the several Creatures agreeably to their Natures for the most effectual Attainment of 'em.*

The Great End of the Creator in the Production of the World we may be assur'd was the Universal Benefit and Happiness of his Creatures according to their several Capacities. For as we have already prov'd that the Perfection of his Nature was absolutely inconsistent with the Proposal of a Chief End in the Creation which was either Evil, or less Good, or Indifferent; so the Same Perfection may convince us that his End in Creating the World could not be any Good or Advantage to Himself who was Indigent of Nothing and whose Essential Happiness was absolutely Incapable of the least Accession.

The *Méans* which his Wisdom ha's employ'd for the obtainment of his Ends wil appear in the General to be.

1. That most Exact and Orderly *Constitution* and *Disposition* of the several Parts of the World. And.

2. That admirably Prudent *Regulation* or *Government* of such Parts of it as are furnisht with a Principle of Life and Action. Of Both which in their Order.

In discoursing of the Former of These Means we shal, here, omit many of the usual Instances of Wisdom and Design, not only because they have been already sufficiently consider'd by Others, but chiefly because, being such as were absolutely Necessary either to the Whole, or to such Parts of the World to which they peculiarly belong; they seem not so fit to be objected to Men of Atheistick Principles as Proofs of the Divine Agency, since they may be eluded as mere Necessary Prerequisites to the Present State of Things. For, may an *Epicurean Atheist* say, We are not so Absurd as to imagin Casual Effects to have been subject to the rigorous Laws of Mechanism, or that the Eternal Selfmotive Matter of the Universe combin'd at the first into none but Regular Models. For it's infinitely probable there have been Innumerable Worlds in the Boundless Extent of Eternity which, by reason of their Confusion and Irregularity, successively dissolv'd into their Original Atoms e're a World so Regular and Consistent as This could be compos'd. And, ev'n in the Present Frame of Things, it's not to be imagin'd (in consistence with our Principles) that the several Parts were all at the very first Hit so wel dispos'd as they now appear to be: It being equally probable that Innumerable Beings have existed therein, which because of some Essential Defect in their Constitution soon return'd to their First Principles, or else, wanting a Capacity to Propagate their Species, became extinct. According to which Hypothesis a Person of that Character will be far from admitting such Regularitys as Arguments of Wisdom and Design; as conceiving 'em to have been no more than was Necessary to the Continuance of the Few Casual Effects which he suppose's to have surviv'd the Infinite Numbers that have long since perisht.

We shal therefore, for the present, not only omit such
Instan-

Instances, but gratifie our *Epicurean* so far as to admit his Principles of Necessary Unintelligent Matter and Eternal Motion. We'l suppose (what he could never have prov'd) that this Motion was a Capable Principle of Variety. Upon which Suppositions we shal not (at present) deny it to have been Possible (thô Infinitely Improbable) that after Innumerable frustraneous Rencounters and Combinations of the Parts of Matter, such a Frame of Things might have resulted as should have had no Essential Defect or Blunder in it, but so much Order and Harmony as was absolutely Necessary to the Subsistence both of the Whole and it's several Parts. Which is the Utmost that the *Epicurean Hypothesis* is fit to account for.

But, in requital for these liberal Concessions, we shal expect that our Adversarys wil grant it most reasonable to conclude that, on the contrary Supposition of such an Intelligent Cause as we think we have prov'd an Absolutely Necessary Being must have been, he would, besides what was requisite to the bare Subsistence of his Creatures, have left some Characters of Wisdom impress'd upon 'em sufficient to distinguish 'em from such Casual Effects as (on supposition of their already baff'd Principles) we have allow'd to be Possible: And, consequently, That if it can be made appear that the Present System of Things (besides the Regularity necessary to it's Subsistence) ha's such Characters of Wisdom every where legible in it, they'l own it far more reasonable to believe they were the Impressions and Signatures of such a Being than the random Effects of Unmanag'd Motion and Impulse.

In expectation of This we shal produce a few Particulars.

1. Supposing that after Innumerable Ages the Matter of the Universe, by an Internal Principle of Motion, might at last have Casually combin'd into Somewhat like a World, yet it can't reasonably be imagin'd but that this World (thô it might have had no Fundamental or Destructive Errour in it's Constitution yet) would have been full of Deformitys and Irregularitys in things not Essential to the Subsistence either of the Whole or of any

any of it's Parts. We might then, without doubt, have expected to see verifi'd all the Monstrous Tales of the Poëts and Hideous Fictions of Dreaming Monks and Legendarys. Men of Irreligious Principles could not have fail'd to be gratifi'd with all the various Instances of Blunder and Deformity that can be imagin'd in consistence with the Mechanism of the World and the Life of Animals.

But what Pains must they, vainly, take to discover One such Instance in the Present Frame of Things? And how Disagreeable an Employment must it needs be to an Atheist, who ha's any Fondness for his Principles, to be at the Expence of so much Labour to discover Defects and Irregularitys in That which to a Diligent Observer stil appear's more Admirable, and which will never fail to suggest New Arguments sufficient to Mortifie his Pride and shock his Infidelity.

To instance only in a Few Particulars which may seem the most Exceptionable.

It the Cragginess and Outward Deformity of Rocks and Mountains offend his Sight, a little Enquiry wil be sufficient to convince him that These ought not to be attributed to a Defect of Skil and Contrivance, but are partly to be resolv'd into Accidental Causes (such as Tempests, Inundations, Earthquakes &c.) and partly to be ascrib'd to Design. For these we may consider as the Foils of Nature whose Deformity is Wisely contriv'd to set off the Beautys of it's Nobler Parts.

If the Minuter Parts of Nature seem void of Beauty and Regularity, a Microscope wil soon undeceive him, and raise his Contempt into Wonder and Astonishment. For Many of these discover more surprizing Characters and Signatures of the Divine Wisdom than Most of it's Larger Productions: Since in these we see All those Miracles in a Narrower Compass which we use to admire in the more Bulky Objects. Thus if we look upon the Seeds of Plants, we shal find they are no other than the Entire Plants themselves in Miniature: So that their Procreation is nothing else but Nutrition or Augmentation of Parts. The Same
ha's

ha's been observ'd of the First Rudiments of Animals.

If certain Species of Animals seem Defective, their very Defects (which yet are only Comparative) wil yield an Argument of Contrivance and Design. For several Organs or Members would have been absolutely Useless in Some Parts of the World (suppose in the Water or within the Surface of the Earth) wick yet it was not fit should want their Proper Inhabitants.

If he look beyond this Earth and it's neighbouring Planets, and view the Wider Spaces of the Heavens shining with the united Glorys of Innumerable Fixt Stars, he'll see little cause to object that these are not dispos'd into Regular Figures but seem carelessly scatter'd like Seeds upon the Earth. For this seeming Disorder may be said to represent something more Noble and Majestick, and which more sensibly strike's the Phansy, than the most Regular Models of Humane Art. Besides, 'tis plain that neither our Station nor the Imperfection of our Sight wil permit us to view the Heavens to the best Advantage: 'Tis probably but as a Point (if compar'd with the Remoter Spaces of the World) which bound's our Prospect. From whence we may have as little reason to attempt to form an Idea of the Whole as an Ant ro judge of the Dimensions and Beauty of the Earth by what may be observ'd in a Molehil. But how Beautiful an Idea of those Remoter Spaces would the New Philosophy give him, which, with so much Reason, from the Analogie of Nature, conclude's the Fixt Stars to be the Centres of so many Particular Systemes, and as so many Suns to distribute Light and Heat to their Peculiar Planets? This Hypothesis would represent the Universe to him as an Assembly of Innumerable Worlds, rang'd at Distances the most Regular and Convenient that can be imagin'd. For 'tis not doubted but the Distances of the Planets of Our Systeme are Actually such.

The Deformity of Some Things consist's in Imagination only, proceeding from Antipathy or Aversion; such as is the Hatred between Men and Serpents, &c.

The

The seeming want of Beauty in Others might Proceed from Design. For did the Same Comeliness discover it's Self in All the Parts of Nature which is so remarkable in Some, the Art of Man would have no subject to work upon, or at least could not exert it's self without the Regret of marring the Work of his Maker.

Besides, The Disagreeableness of some Things may frequently proceed from the Peculiar Make of our Senses, or the Complexions and Constitutions of our Bodys. For it's reasonable to think that a very Exquisite Figure and Con-texture of Parts may sometimes cause none of the most grateful Impressions on our Organs. This may appear from the Regular shapes of the Minute Parts of Salts; and from the Effects of Poisons which are sometimes found to be different on different Animals.

To conclude, The Present Frame of Things seem's so far from being justly chargeable with Blunder, Irregularity, and Deformity that, to the less considerate, divers Instances of Regularity and Design may appear Superfluous. Of This sort are the Regular shapes and the Colours of Divers Stones, and particularly the Curious Figures of the Leaves of Plants which are found Naturally represented on Coalstone. The Wise Author of Nature ha'sn't left ev'n the Dark Entrails of the Earth without Testimonys of his Divine Skil, to the end that Observing Men might no where want Motives to admire and adore him.

2. Supposing it might so have happen'd that the Universe shou'd have yielded no Imaginable Instance of Blunder and Deformity, yet 'tis unconceivable, on this Atheistick Hypothesis, how Every thing should have been dispos'd *for the Best*, as in the Present System of Things. As,

1. That Nothing should be without it's Use. The Observation of the World long since oblig'd the Philosophers (tho, some of 'em, not very Partial to the Cause of a Deity) to confess and lay it down for a Maxim *That Nature doth Nothing in vain.*

'Twere a ridiculous Labour to undertake a Discovery of the

the Usefulness of Every Thing in Nature; which is so Various and Exuberant in it's Productions. 'Twill be enough if we can Manifest the Usefulness of Such things as are subject to Common Observation and Experience. For, if none of These are without their Uses, we have all the Reason in the world to conclude the Same of All Others.

We shal single out such Instances as seem the most Unaccountable

Tho the Obliquity of the *Earth's* Axis may seem irreconcilable to Mathematical Exactness, yet we are to consider that to This we owe the Pleasant and Useful Variety of Seasons, and the Fittest imaginable Proportion of Heat and Cold, Light and Darkeness that is possibly consistent with the Figure of the Earth.

If it be said the *Other Planets* are set at too great a Distance from the Earth and, by consequence, are the less capable of supplying the Absence of the Sun's Light; we shal see reason to believe that this was so order'd to prevent a Greater Inconvenience than that of Darkeness, viz, the Destruction of Plants and Animals by Excessive and Disorderly Tides or Elevations of the sea, which are observ'd to Depend on the Motions and Neighbourhood of those Great Bodys.

To the *Fixt Stars*, (tho many of 'em seem to be made only to twinkle, and appear to be almost as Insignificant Members of the World as either a Spark or a Glowworm yet) we partly owe the Solid advantages we reap by Navigation; not to mention the Greater advantages of Habitation, Convenience, and Delight which they (or at least the Planets which, from the Analogie of Nature, we may probably conclude do attend'em) may yield to Innumerable Nobler Beings than our Selves.

To the *Mountains*, which Some have misrepresented as the Wens and Excrescences of Nature, we owe the most Pleasant Prospects, the most Delicious Wines, the Richest and most Useful Metals, Minerals, and other Fossils; and that which is more than All, the Convenience of Navigable Rivers and Fountains.

To

To the *Seas* we are indebted for those Vast Quantities of Vapours which refresh and fructify the Earth; and for our Speedy and Commodious Passage to the Remotest Nations. Both which Blessings we must in a very great degree have wanted had the Proportion of the Waters to the dry Land been considerably less than at present.

If *Poisons* are sometimes destructive, yet when skilfully prepar'd, they become Beneficial, and the Means to preserve Life when Food is insufficient to that end.

To *Whirlwinds* and *Thunder* we owe the Dissipation of Pestilential Steams and the Cleansing of the Air the Chief Instrument of Life.

In short, If the *Air* be sometimes the Vehicle of *Infection* and *Blasting*; if the Water be render'd Unsafe by *Rocks*, *Quick sands* and *Whirlpools*; If the *Fire* be prone to *Conflagrations*; If the Earth sometimes tremble's and swallow's up it's Inhabitants; neither are These without their Uses. If it was convenient to implant in us the Principle of Fear, it could not be amiss to place us among such Objects as are apt sometimes to excite and exercise it. If it be natural to Men as Creatures to be Defectible and capable of Degeneracy, then whatever contribute's to retain 'em within the Bounds of Duty and Allegiance, and thereby prevent's a Greater Evil, become's it's self an Advantage. But, what could have been a more Effectual Curb on Vice and Spur to Virtue than that which is apt to remind us how easily the Elements may be arm'd against us to our Destruction, and the very Supports of our Lives become the Instruments of our Maker's Justice?

2. 'Tis stil less conceivable on the Principles of *Epicurus* how the Same Thing should have been dispos'd for such *Variety* of Particular Uses as may be observ'd in the World. To obtain a great Number of Ends by as few Means as may be, is the Highest Point of Wisdom. But Nothing can be imagin'd more Admirable in This respect than the Present Frame of Things. Thus, tho' the Humane Body is compos'd of a Great Variety of Parts, yet how much more Numerous are their Uses?

How

How many are the Uses of the Hand which, directed by Reason, is instead of All other Instruments? How many Advantages do we owe to the Eye, the Ear, and the Tongue? And, if we take a deeper View and look into the Minuter Parts of which These are compounded, What can be more Admirable than the Variety of Aims and Intentions that may be observ'd in Each? The several Uses of the Structure and Position of each Single Muscle have been computed by *Galen* in his Book *de Formatione Fœtus* to be no less than Ten. The like may be observ'd with reference to the Bones and Other Similar Parts; but especially with respect to the Members or such Parts as are Heterogeneous or Dissimilar. Yet it's not to be doubted but that a far less degree of Usefulness in any of These might have been sufficient to our Subsistence.

3. 'Tis still less accountable, by the Epicurean Principles, how Every thing could be adapted to it's particular Uses in the *Fittest and most Regular Manner*. Yet, what Instrument could be better suited to Vision than the Eye, to Operation than the Hand, to Motion than the Foot or Wing? What could have been invented so convenient as the Distances, Inclinations, and Celeritys of the Planets of Our System? What could be more Nice and Exact in the General than the Adjustment of the Make of the Bodys and the Degrees of All Sensations of Animals to their Common and Particular Circumstances? This whoever ha's observ'd can never enough admire. Yet neither can such Exactness in All these respects be imagin'd to have been of Absolute Necessity to the Subsistence and Preservation of Animals.

4. 'Tis no less Unaccountable by the Hypothesis of *Epicurus* that so many different Parts should so Fitly and Harmoniously conspire to *One Common Use*. How Different are the Parts that contribute to Motion and Nutrition in Man and other Animals? Yet how Fit is their Position and how exquisitely Regular is their Action? But what is chiefly to be noted is, that All these Parts were not Absolutely Necessary to the Acts themselves but only to the

Perfection of 'em. For had the least Part been wanting, the Acts would have been Imperfect or Irregular; and should Others have been added they could not have been better'd or improv'd. A Man might have been capable of Nourishment without the Assistance of the Tongue or Spittle; but it must have requir'd more Time, and been attended with less Pleasure. A Bird might have been capable of Flight without the Direction or Steerage of it's Tail; but then 'twould have been less Steddy and difficultly govern'd. And, by the addition of These (how inconsiderable soever they may seem in Themselves) the Acts are render'd so Perfect that the Wit of Man is incapable of making the least Improvement.

5. 'Tis stil less accountable by the Principles of Epicurism that almost Every thing should be dispos'd not only for Use but for *Ornament*. The Beautys of Nature need no Artifice to varnish and set 'em off. 'Tis a sufficient Acknowledgment of This that the most admir'd Artists never propose to Exceed but to Imitate it. The Naked Eye may convince us of the Exquisite Colours and Proportions of the Greater Parts of the World; and the Microscope wil surprize us with the far more Admirable Structure and Symmetrie of the Lesser. But in nothing is this Beauty more remarkable than in Animals and Vegetables. Yet sure none can be so Absurd as to imagine that mere Colour and Proportion in the Outward Make of their Bodys was of Absolute Necessity to their Subsistence. Nor is it a jot more reasonable to conclude that the so Curious Embroidery of the Veins, Arterys, and Fibres in their Inward Constituton was thus Necessary. For a Skilful Anatomist or Botanist know's how to separate divers of those Parts without the Destruction of the Individual. And yet such Beauty and Exactness in the Outward and Inward Make of Plants and Animals is not only every where to be met with in the World, but Both are diversifi'd almost Infinitely and beyond Imagination.

6. 'Tis equally Unaccountable by That Hypothesis that the most Noble and Useful Parts of Animals should always be either *well secur'd* or else *Double*. Thus the

Heart

Heart and Brain, which 'twas requisite should be Single, are lodg'd in the Interiour Part of the Body, and strongly fortifi'd with the Bones of the Head and Breast. The Lungs and Kidneys, tho' likewise plac'd Within the Body yet, because by the nature of their Office more subject to Accidents, are Double; to the end that if, by Obstructions or any other Mischief, the One should become Unserviceable, the Other might be sufficient to preserve the Individual. Thus, the Eyes, being necessarily plac'd in the Exterieur Part, are giv'n us by Pairs, and guarded by Eyebrows and Lids fortifi'd with Bristles. And not only so, but in Some Animals, by whose method of living they are more expos'd to danger, we may observe a peculiar Provision for their Security by means of a certain Horny moveable Membrane which, being transparent, hinder's not the Sight ev'n at the time when it guard's it from Accidents. This may be observ'd in Frogs and, with some Variety, in divers other Animals. Yet these Precautions can't be pretended to have been Absolutely Necessary to their Subsistence, any more than those in the former Instances to our Own.

7. 'Tis equally Unaccountable by the Principles of *Epicurus* that all *Useless Expense* of Organs in Animals should be avoided. As the Great Author of Nature ha's been very Bountiful with respect to the Multiplicity of the Uses of such Organs or Members as he ha's bestow'd, so he ha's been no less Sparing and Frugal with reference to the Organs Themselves. As there is no Part but what he's it's Use in General, so there's none but is suited to the Particular State and Circumstances of the Animal to which it belong's. Thus Animals whose Peculiar Make and Constitution ha's qualifi'd 'em to be the Constant Inhabitants of the Watry Element (which is not so fit for the Conveyance of Sounds) are observ'd to want the Organs proper for the forming of Sounds. And thus Animals which have Teeth on Both Jaws have but One Stomach; since in Them any more would have been Superfluous and Unnecessary to Digestion. Whereas, had the Epicurean Hypothesis

pothesis been True, we might have expected to have seen all the imaginable Instances of Superfluity as well as of Defect.

But here I apprehend it may be objected that Divers of these Instances of Contrivance and Design are to be observ'd in such Animals as are said to be *sponte Nata* or bred of Putrefaction and Moisture.

But admitting there are such Animals, and that their Make or Constitution yield's equal Appearances of Wisdom and Skil with that of Other Beings, 'tis evidently most reasonable to conclude from thence that they likewise proceeded from the Mediate or Immediate Efficiency of a Wise and Intelligent Cause. And so much the rather, because Wisdom is ever most discernable when it produce's a Regular Effect from Indispos'd Materials. At least, no Admirer of *Epicurus* can imagin such a Constant Regularity as is observ'd in those reputed Equivocal Animals to have been purely Casual in any tolerable Consistence with his own Principles, which suppose such Innumerable Blunders to have happen'd at the Original Coalition of the Parts of Matter.

Yet that this Opinion of Equivocal Generation is a great Mistake is sufficiently clear from the Discoverys of divers of the Moderns, who have made it appear that there's no Animal Produc't in the Present Course of Nature but by means of some Other Animal from some Preëxistent Seed.

Others wil perhaps allow these Instances of Wisdom and Design, but wil choose to ascribe 'em to an Eternal Material *Anima Mundi* or Soul of the World. But this Notion of a Soul of the World is no other than a Corrupt and Disparaging Idea of God, and ha's already been confuted.

Lastly, Others wil possibly have recourse with the *Spi-
nosists* to that Antiquated Hypothesis of the Eternity of the Present Frame and State of Things; and wil pretend to reverse the Edge of our Argument by producing the Regularity and other Perfections of the World to prove it to be that Necessary and Perfect Being which we formerly

ly discover'd, and not the Effect of Wisdom and Final Causes. But this Conceit ha's likewise been abundantly confuted already when we demonstrated the Absurdity of Absolutely Necessary Matter and the Possibility and Reality of a Creation. And, perhaps, it need's no better Confutation than that of the Epicurean Poët *Lucretius* arguing from the late Begining of History and the Invention of Arts and Sciences.

- - - - *Si nulla fuit Genitalis Origo
Terrarum & Cæli, semperque Æterna fuere
Cur supra Bellum Thebanum & Funera Trojæ
Non alias alii quoque Res cecinere Poëtæ?*

But grant the World Eternal, grant it knew
No Infancy, and grant it never New;
Why then no Wars our Poëts Songs employ
Beyond the Siege of Thebes, or that of Troy?

CREECH.

So that, upon the Whole, it must be confest by such as ever us'd the least Observation and Reflection that the World every where abound's with such Characters and Impresses of Inimitable Wisdom as make it Infinitely reasonable to conclude it to be the Creature of a Perfectly Wise and Beneficent Being.

II. 2. The Other of those Means imploy'd by the Divine Wisdom for the attaining it's Great Ends in the Creation we observ'd to be that Admirable Regulation or Government of such Parts of the World as are furnisht with a Principle of Life and Action. This we may perceive to be different according to the Diversity of it's Subjects; which are either Rational or Irrational. The Government of the Former is by Laws, of the Latter by Instincts. We shal begin with the Latter.

If we view the Actions of Brute Animals in general,

we shal perhaps see little reason to believe they proceed either from an Innate Intelligent Principle, or from the mere Mechanism or Texture of their Organs.

1. Not from an Innate Intelligent Principle. For tho' divers of 'em to which they are Naturally bent, have a near Resemblance of Contrivance and Design, yet the Invariableness of such Actions sufficiently discover's 'em not to be the Effects of Reason. The Productions of Reason are wont to be diversifi'd to an almost Infinite Variety. If All the Great Masters in Architecture were order'd severally to compose the most Exquisite Model of a Royal Palace that they could contrive, we should find the Models as distinguishable as their Authors. Or should the most Celebrated Orators in the World undertake to declaim on any Particular Subject, 'tis great Odds whether any Two of 'em would be found exactly to agree in their Methods and Materials. Whereas in the most Admir'd Performances of Brutes the case is very different. Birds of the Same Species in the same Climate build their Nests of the Same Materials (if Procurable) and in the Same Form. The several Communitys of Bees, without any precedent Instruction, frame their Habitations in the Same Manner, as well as submit to the Same Method of Government. And, (which is no less considerable to our present purpose) they are Unimprovable as to such Acts as they perform by a Natural Propension. We may perhaps as easily teach a Stone in it's Descent to describe Circles or any other the most Regular Figures, as a Bird to build it's Nest or a Bee to compose it's Cells by a new Model. And tho' as to Other Acts, towards which they have no natural Propension, Some Brutes are found capable of Improvement, yet this argu's no intelligent Principle, but may be sufficiently accounted for from the Mechanism of their Bodies. For frequent Exercise producing an Aptitude to particular Acts, we may fitly resemble such Tricks of Brutes to the Motions of the Fingers on a Musical Instrument: Which frequently are regular enough tho' perform'd without the usual Attention or Preception. Yet

2. Mere Mechanism, or the Structure and Organization of

of their Parts, seem's no sufficient Cause of All the Operations of Brutes. This may appear from the Variableness of such Unimprov'd Actions of theirs as don't proceed from any Natural Propension. As Some Actions of Brutes are Natural and Uniform, so Others are so strangely Diversifi'd that they seem near akin to such as are Voluntary. Which Observation may be made not only with reference to such Animals as are seemingly more Perfect, such as Apes, Beavers &c., but ev'n with respect to such as are reputed the Meanest and most Contemptible. If we look upon an Anthill or into a Beehive we shal observe those Little Animals almost as differently employ'd as the Inhabitants of a City. When, at the same time, they are every way beset with the Same Objects and, for ought appear's, receive the Same Impressions from Without. A Sufficient Proof that the Diversity in their Actions ought not to be ascrib'd to any External Impressions working on the Mechanism of their Bodys, but rather to such an Internal Vital Principle as direct's the Motions of those who perform such strange Actions in their Sleep.

We may therefore properly enough distinguish the Principle of Brutal Action by the Name of *Phantasy*; since This, ev'n in our Selves, is found to be distinct from Reason, and yet to be a Vital Principle sufficiently distinguish'd from mere Mechanism.

Now as Reason is the Governing Principle of Man, so Phantasy is of Brutes. And as the Dictates of every man's Reason, how Different soever in Matters of less Concern or greater Difficulty yet, are commonly Uniform with reference to Actions of the Utmost Consequence to the General Welfare of the Humane Species, and are wont to come under the Notion of *Laws*; so in Brutes the Impressions of Phantasy, how Different and Variable soever in Cases of less Concern, may yet be observ'd to be Uniform when they tend directly to the benefit and Preservation of their respective Kinds; and they are commonly call'd *Instincts*. Which Instincts are in some respect the Same to Brutes that Laws are to Men and Other Intelligent Creatures. Such are the Instincts of Gratitude to Benefactors, of

Association for mutual Defense, of Provision for their Young, and the like.

And herein is the Wisdom of the Great Father of the World most clearly visible, in that he ha's implanted such an Uniform Principle of Action in those less capable Agents which so directly tend's to the attaining his most Beneficent End The Universal Welfare and Advantage of the Vital Part of his Creation.

2. The Other Method of Government instituted by the Wise Author of Nature is by *Laws*. Which Government is Twofold; either of *Particulars* or of *Communitys*. It's Foundation is the Absolute Propriety of the Creator in his Creatures antecedent to Consent or Contract. It's Original Rule or Standard is the Nature and Wil of the Supreme Governor. It's *Immediate* Instrument is Reason, or that Faculty of Comparing and Connecting Truths already known in order to the Illation and Discovery of Other Truths before unknown.

The Existence or Reality of this Government appear's from hence, that there are (as we just now observ'd, certain Uniform Beneficial Dictates of Reason with reference to Matters of the Highest Concern to the Welfare and Happiness of Intelligent Creatures, grounded on the Natural Relations of Fit and Unfit Discernable in Things and Actions, of which every such Creature acting like himself can't be ignorant. These Dictates are qualify'd to be a Rule of Action and a Standard of the Conduct of Life. But whatever appear's qualify'd to be a Rule with reference to the Actions of the Creatures can be no other than a Law with reference to the Design of the Creator, whose Immutable Uniform Intent (as was prov'd) can't but be *The Universal Good of his Creation*.

In the Subjects of this Government (of how different Natures and Circumstances soever in Other respects) there must be these Two Principal Qualifications, *Reason* and *Liberty*. Without the Former they can't be qualify'd for the Knowledge of their Duty; without the Latter they can't duly discharge it. Where a sufficient Degree of Either of These is wanting or incapable of due Exercise, there a

Government by Laws would be Ludicrous and Insignificant. Where Both concur in the requisite Perfection they found an Immediate Obligation to Obedience; tho' possibly with some variety proportionate to the degree of the Perfection of Each. From this Obligation result's the Supposition of Rewards and Punishments, and of Justice in proportioning and dispensing 'em. Which appear to have the Same Foundation and Reason with Government it's Self, viz, The Absolute Propriety of the Creator in his Creatures, and the Supream Perfection of his Wisdom which can't but Immutably incline him to act in Conformity to the States and Capacitys of his Subjects and to that Original Fitness or Unfitness which is in the Natures and Circumstances of Things. But of this more will be said anon.

Were there no Natural Laws so Universally promulgated as These, Man the most Noble of Inferiour Beings who, by reason of his Great Capacity, is qualify'd for such Excellent Purposes, would become far more mischievous than the Brutes. His Wit and Contrivance, when free from Obligation and Restraint, would probably soon degenerate into Craft and Circumvention. His Ambition would know no other Limits but those of his Power, and an Ability to Hurt would be reputed a sufficient Warrant to do so. Every thing would be measur'd by Appetite and Interest; and All the Virtues would shrink into the Narrow Principle of Selflove. The Effects of which would be as various as either the wanton Caprices of Fancy, or the uncertain Fluctuations of the Rougher Passions. All men would be Tyrants to the Inferiour Creatures; and Each man (as far as consistent with his Ability and his Present Notion of Interest) would be so to Another. And in short, every thing would tend to a State of War and Confusion as far as the Predominant Principle of Selflove and the Natural Inclination to Society would permit. Which make's it Manifest both how Necessary such Government is to the Great End of the Creator (viz, the Good of his Creatures) and how Unsuitable it would be to his Wisdom (and, by consequence, how Im-

An Enquiry into the Existence;
possible to him) to grant a Discharge from the Obligations
of Reason.

In attempting to make some Discovery of the Methods of the Divine Wisdom in that Government which is design'd for the Prevention of these Mischiefs, we shal First endeavour to form an Idea of it as it respect's Particulars, and then add something with reference to the Divine Government of Communities.

Tho the Wisdom of the Beneficent Creator in the Government of Particular Persons as such may wel be suppos'd in a great degree inscrutable to Us, yet from the Consideration of the Perfections of his own Nature and the Nature and Circumstances of the Subjects of this Government, compar'd with our Experience and the Credible Tradition of Former Ages, we may questionless, by the careful exercise of our Reason, attain some tolerable satisfaction. In order to which we shal proceed by steps, illustrating the Discoverys of Reason by the Consent and Testimony of the Scripture-revelation.

1. 'Tis evident, as we observ'd before, that the Great End or Design of the Wise Governor of the World is the Universal Welfare and Happiness of his Subjects according to their Several Capacities.

2. As it's the Property of Perfect Wisdom not only to propose the Best Ends but to choose the Fittest and most Effectual Means, so we need not doubt but the Wisest of Beings make's use of such Methods of Government as are most conducive to this his End in consistence with his own Perfection and with the States and Capacities of his Subjects.

3. Consequently, we can't suppose his Intent to have been to subject the Happiness of any of his Creatures to a Perpetual Hazard: Since this would have been to expose his own Great Design to the Continual Danger of a Defeat.

4. Therefore, since Intelligent Creatures are under a Natural Obligation to the Laws of Reason; and since their Chief Happiness could not but depend on their Free Obedience to those Laws; and since the Exercise of Liberty in Imperfect Agents could not be without a Possibility of Disobedience; it can't be suppos'd to have been the Design of the Wise Gover-

nour.

mour of the World always to suspend their Supreme Happiness on so Precarious and Uncertain a Condition as that of a Free Obedience.

5. Yet, a Total Determination or Necessitation of Intelligent Creatures to Acts of Obedience is Absolutely Inconsistent with the Notion of Government by Laws enforc'd by Rewards and Punishments and consequently with the Great Creator's Wisdom in qualifying 'em for such Government.

This is not only agreeable to Scripture and Reason, but to Experience; and sufficiently account's for the Permission of sin in the World.

6. Consequently, Whatever Other supposition is Totally destructive of Liberty is alike Inconsistent with the Notion of Government by Laws.

Such, 'tis humbly conceiv'd, is the Opinion of an Absolute and Particular Foreknowledge as suppos'd to be founded on Particular Absolute Decrees of All Events both Good and Evil and an Universal Efficacious Concurse. For this seem's manifestly to infer an Universal External Constraint which can't but be entirely destructive of Liberty. As may be shown in the Second Book.

As for such as suppose an Absolute Particular Eternal Foreknowledge of All Events without founding it on Absolute Decrees and an Efficacious Concurse in order to their Accomplishment; tho' their Opinion seem's both more Pious and not so Directly Destructive of Liberty, yet 'tis perhaps equally Indefensible. For (not again to mention it's Inconsistence with the Divine Independence) this, at least, is Clear, that Whatever is thus Certainly Foreknown must be Foreknown as Fixt and Determin'd. But 'tis no less Clear that All such Events as depend entirely on the Creature's Liberty (whose very Nature we have observ'd to consist in an Indetermination) can have had no Fixing or Predetermining Cause. But to say that an Event in it's very Nature Indetermin'd and, by consequence, in it's self Uncertain, is Certainly Foreknown, is, it's humbly conceiv'd, to affirm Certainty and Uncertainty of the Same Subject at once and in the Same sense. Nor can the Certain Foreknowledge of such Events be prov'd from
the

An Enquiry into the Existence,
the Scripture Prophecys; as may Appear under the Ninth Proposition.

7. *A Determination to Future Obedience (in a manner agreeable to the Nature of an Intelligent Being) consequent on a Free Obedience in a state of Tryal is highly suitable to the Character of the Wise and Beneficent Governour of the World.*

The supposition of such a Determination as This both secure's the Great End of the most Beneficent Creator, and admir's a sufficient Use of the Creature's Liberty. And as it's very consonant to Reason, so it's exactly agreeable to the Christian Scheme. For the Scriptures sufficiently intimate that such of those Nobler Beings (known to Us by the Name of *Angels*) who preserv'd their Innocence in a State of Tryal, were favour'd with a Confirmation in Obedience and Felicity. And we are assur'd this will be the Happy Case of such Other Intelligent Belngs as shal make a Right Use of their Liberty in the time of their respective Tryals.

8. *'Tis very agreeable to the Wisdom of the Supreme Governour that the State of Tryal should be of some Latitude, to yield room to Repentance and Amendment in case of Transgression.*

This is sufficiently consistent with the Scripture-revelation. For there's no Necessary Reason to conclude that the Apostate Spirits (tho' in very different Circumstances from our's) were doom'd to Unhappiness immediately on their First Rebellion. And 't is manifestly suitable to our Own Experience whose Whole life appear's to be Ordinarily no other than a State of Tryal. For that it is not the Final State of Rewards and Punishments is most evident from the Present Unequal Distribution of Things.

This help's us to unravel divers Intricacys in the Conduct of the Divine Government. For if the Present Life be no other than a State of Tryal, we may cease to wonder that Ill men are not always punisht here, nor the Virtuous rewarded; or that the Impious so frequently abound with secular Advantages, while the Virtuous are distressed and the Objects of Contempt. For Present Prosperity or Adversity can't, on that supposition, be either Good or
Evil

Evil in Themselves ; but may be indifferently either the One or the Other according to their Aspect and Influence on the Future State: Which, it's most evident, may be very different according as they are either abus'd or improv'd.

'Tis therefore very consistent with the Wisdom of the Supreme Governour to allow to his Subjects (as he usually do's) the Free use of their Facultys, and to suffer Effects to follow the Influence of their Immediate Causes, without frequently interrupting the establish'd Order of Nature. 'Twas very fit that Riches, Honour and Reputation should usually be the Effects of Industry and Prudent Management ; and that the Contrary Effects should proceed from the Contrary Causes, without any Peculiar Regard to Persons or Circumstances. For Prudence and Industry are Political Virtues and Naturally tend to the Good of Society, tho' they may be sometimes exercis'd by Persons Morally Vitious. But indeed when Industry degenerates into Rapine and Violence, and Prudence into Craft and Circumvention then tho' their Permission is stil very agreeable to our Notion of the Divine Government (as being the Government of Free Agents) yet it may be sometimes very suitable to the Wisdom of the Beneficent Governour of the World to interpose and to cause some Variety in the Usual Series of Events. But Experience assures us that this do'sn't always happen, and but very Seldom when these Vices don't so Immediately tend to the Destruction of Society. For as for the Actions of Particular Persons towards each other in this Present Scene of Things, we find 'em, for the most part, to resemble the Celebrated Games among the Greeks; wherein every man was permitted to exert his Whole Skill and Activity, and in case of Victory receiv'd his Reward not according to the Quality of the Person but that of the Performance.

9. *An Interruption of the State of Tryal by a Determination to certain Acts which the Divine Wisdom may have judg'd fit to be decree'd for the General Good either of the World or of Entire Communizys, is sometimes very suitable to our Idea of This Divine Government.*

Of

Of this Sort, 'tis humbly conceiv'd, was the Act of Judas in Betraying our Saviour; and, in the General, whatever Acts may be certainly prov'd to have been Absolutely foretold in Scripture.

And tho' Some of those Acts, consider'd in their Immediate Circumstances, without regard to their Remoter Consequences, may seem to have been Morally Evil, yet, with all due Submission, it appear's to have been no way inconsistent with the Perfection of the Great Governour of the World to preordain 'em in order to a much Greater Good. For tho' We who are Naturally Subject to a Superiour Wil, We who have no Share in the Supreme Government of the World, nor any sufficient Capacity to judge of or to determin the Tendency and Consequences of Actions in their Full Extent, may not ordain an Act which, consider'd in it's Immediate Circumstances, appear's to be Evil, that Good may come of it; yet it's conceiv'd the Case is widely different with respect to the Supreme Governour.

This, if it can be set in a due Light, wil perhaps prove no Inconsiderable Expedient towards the removing of Many Difficultys which have cast so thick a Darkn's on divers Acts of the Divine Government. To which end I shal humbly offer the Following Remarks.

I. 1. 'Tis clear that the Notion ev'n of *Moral Natural Evil* do'sn't consist in it's being any Real Detriment to the Great Governour of the World. When therefore we meet with such Expressions in the Scripture-revelation as seem to ascribe to him the Passions of Anger and Revenge, or to intimate that Sin is any Disturbance to his Repose and Felicity, 'tis agree'd by All Sober Reasoners that they are to be understood as spoken in Condescension to Humane Capacities.

II. 2. 'Tis agree'd that no Humane Act is in it's self either Morally Good or Evil, but Indifferent. If therefore any Act become's either the One or the Other, it must be on account of it's Proper Circumstances and Natural Consequences; or by reason of the Relations it acquire's. Now, tho' the Original Reason why the No-
tion

tion of Moral Natural Evil become's 'affixt to any Particular Relations of Natural Acts is not the Mere Arbitrary Pleasure of the Deity, but his very Nature, yet 'tis That Perfection of his Nature which we must conceive to have an Immediate Influence on the Government of the World and to be the Standard of All Moral Evil whatever. Which Perfection we have observ'd to be his *Wisdom*.

Wherefore in forming a Notion of the Moral Good or Evil of any Particular Act we must, it seem's, consider it both in it's Proper Immediate Circumstances and in it's Remotest Natural Consequences with reference to This Governing Perfection of the Great Lord of the World. According to which Method, I conceive that.

1. If the Act both in it's Proper Immediate Circumstances and Remotest Natural Consequences be both Agreeable to the Notion and Conducive to the Ends of the Divine or most Perfect Wisdom, 'tis then in the Completest Sense Morally Good or Fit to be ordain'd.

2. If the Act be Disagreeable in it's Proper Immediate Circumstances to the Notion of the Divine Wisdom, and yet Conducive to it's Ends in it's Remoter Natural Consequences; then tho' it come's not up to the Complete Idea of Moral Goodness or Fitness, yet 'tis not to be reputed Morally Evil or Absolutely Unfit to be ordain'd by an Agent not subject to any Obligation to the Contrary. But

3. If, in the Last place, an Act be neither Agreeable to the Idea of the Divine Governing Perfection (his Wisdom) nor Conducive to but Destructive of it's Great and most Beneficent Designs in the Government of the World, then 'tis Moral Evil or Absolutely Unfit.

So that Moral Evil appear's to have Two Distinct Notions in it, viz, a Dissimilitude or Disagreeableness to the Governing Perfection of the Great Lord of the World, and likewise a Tendency to frustrate his most Beneficent Ends in the Exercise of it: Of which only the Latter ha's Immutably the Nature of Moral Evil.

III. 3. It seem's clear that the Notions of *Holiness* and *Justice* (tho' conceiv'd as Essential to the Idea of God) aren't,

aren't, in Reality, different from that of his Wisdom diversly consider'd; and by consequence aren't to be the Standards of our Judgment of Moral Evil as distinguish'd from That.

If we duly reflect we shal perhaps see reason to conclude that by *Essential Holiness* nothing else can be meant but the General Indetermin'd Rectitude or Perfection of the Divine Wisdom, whereby the Deity Immutably Perceiv's and Incline's to what is Best and Fittest in governing the World. For This is plainly the Reason of his Abhorrence or Disapprobation of Moral Evil, as Contrary to the Ends of his Government: Which Disapprobation is usually conceiv'd as the Immediate Result of Holiness.

And as for the Attribute of *Justice*, 'tis no other, it's conceiv'd, than the Divine Wisdom consider'd as Particularly Determin'd to an Equal Retribution. For such Determination is plainly the Reason why the Great Governour of the World is conceiv'd to be Incapable either of Acquitting the Impenitently Guilty or of Punishing the Purely Innocent: Which is the Complete Notion of Justice as concern'd in the Present Question.

From this Account of the Nature of *Moral Evil* aswell as of *Holiness* and *Justice* it seem's clearly to follow, That tho' the Supreme Governour can't in consistence with his Holiness and Justice (i: e: with the Perfection and Exercise of his Wisdom) preordain an Act Morally Evil, or an Act both in it's Circumstances and Natural Consequences directly tending to frustrate the Great Ends of his Wisdom in the Government of the World; yet to suppose him to preordain an Act or Event Disagreeable in it's Immediate Circumstances but, at the Same time, Conducive to those Ends in it's Remoter Natural Consequences, is no way Inconsistent with the Character of the most Just and Holy (i: e: of the Wisest) of Beings.

More Particularly. Such a Preordination can't, 'tis conceiv'd, be Inconsistent with the *Holiness* of God (or with the Indetermin'd Rectitude or Perfection of his Wisdom;) since hereby he only use's the most Conducive Means for
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the Attainment of the Best Ends : Which is so far from being Contrary to his Wisdom that it yield's us the most Perfect Idea of it.

Nor can this be Inconsistent with his *Justice* (or his Wisdom consider'd as Determin'd to an Equal Retribution;) since, in case of the Preordination of such an Act or Event for the General Good, the Particular Instrument or Instruments can't Merely on That account be capable of Guilt; and by consequence can't be liable to Punishment purely for an Act to which they were Absolutely Preordain'd and Irresistibly Determin'd.

To clear this, we may single out the Famous Example of *Judas* and some of the Crucifiers of our Saviour.

As for the Act of *Judas* in Betraying his Master: the Scripture say's 'twas not barely by the Divine Permission, but *according to the Determinate Counsel and Foreknowledge of God*. And not only so, but our Saviour is affirm'd to have Foreknown who should betray him and at what Time. But how may we conceive this Predetermination both of the Act and the Person to have been consistent with our Notion of the Divine Government? If we consider the Act in it's Immediate Circumstances and Nearer Consequences, 'tis certain there could be nothing more Disagreeable to the Perfection of the Divine Wisdom, nor more Directly tending to frustrate it's Great Ends in the Government of the World. If then the Determination of *Judas* to Such an Act was nevertheless Consistent with this Governing Property of the Supreme Lawgiver (as All who believe the Scriptures must allow) it follow's that it could be on no other account than of it's Remoter Consequences; than which none could be more Conducive to the Universal Good of Mankind or consequently to the Attainment of the Great Ends of the Divine Wisdom in the Government of the World.

If it be said that this was a most Impious Act of *Judas*; I own it became so by the Accidental Circumstances of Malice and Covetousness to which he was remarkably inclin'd, as our Saviour but too plainly intimate's by calling

him *Thief* and *Devil*; which Circumstances None wil imagin to have been the Effects of the Divine Preordination. So that the Case of *Judas* in This Respect appear's to have been much the same with that of the *Israelites* on another Occasion. These God had commanded to chastise the People of *Judah*. Which Commission they readily executed. And in so doing they can't be said to have been Criminal. Yet, 'tis plain, they became so by the Accidental Mixture of Malice and Revenge in the Execution. And accordingly we find they were severely reprimanded by the Prophet, who told 'em they had *destroy'd their Brethren with a Rage that reacht to Heaven*.

And thô *Judas* Himself, when he brought again the 30. Pieces, said *I have sinn'd in that I have betray'd the Innocent blood*, yet this is no sufficient Proof of his being liable to Punishment merely for the Act of Betraying. The Case of *Judas* being so Peculiar we may easily conceive he was ignorant of his State with reference to the Divine Decree. Wherefore finding a great degree of Malice and Covetousness to have accompany'd his Action, he was apt to imagin these to have been the Principles from whence it Originally proceeded.

If the Apostle *Peter* call's the Thirty Pieces of Silver *the Reward of Iniquity*; This can prove nothing. For being the Reward of an Action attended with such Horrible Impietys as by accident render'd it a Sinful Act, it might very well be term'd *the Reward of Iniquity*.

But, may Some say, Is not Sin defin'd by the Apostle to be *the Transgression of the Law*? And was not the Betraying of an Innocent Person to death such a Transgression? I answer. The Law was design'd as a Rule to such only as are Free Agents; and consequently in Any Case wherein an Agent is Unavoidably depriv'd of Freedom; his Act can't justly be reputed a Transgression. But in This Case, *Judas* seem's to have been no Free Agent but a Mere Instrument irresistibly actuated by an External Influence: And therefore it could not, Simply consider'd, be reputed his Own Act; nor could he by consequence transgress or be be liable to Punishment Merely on That Account.

count. And as for the Sovereign of the World who appear's to have Absolutely Decree'd the Event and Permitted the Tempter to Influence the Action of *Judas*, 'twas no Injustice in Him; since he had an Absolute Right of Dominion not only over *Judas* but over the Blessed *Jesus* as his Creature. Such Preordination was neither Contrary to the Perfection of God, as proceeding from a most Wise and Beneficent Intention; nor to his Reveal'd Wil, which we may wel conclude was design'd as a Standard of Action in Ordinary Cases only, or such wherein the Creatures are alone concern'd; not in Cases so Peculiar as This, wherein the Deity was so Particularly interested.

'Tis confess't the Apostle *Peter* call's the Act of *Judas* a *Transgression*. But this, it's humbly conceiv'd, can't be meant of the merely executing what was necessary to the fulfilling the Scripture prophesys, to which he was not only Preordain'd but strongly influenc'd by the Tempter; but rather of his executing it in so Criminal a Manner, viz, with a Preconceiv'd Malice and Habituatè Covetousness. And the like may Perhaps be said of the Persons who were chiefly Instrumental to our Saviour's Crucifixion, who, as the Same Apostle say's, had by *Wicked Hands* Crucifi'd and Slain him.

If *Judas* be term'd *the Son of Perdition*, This may not import his being Predestinated to *Eternal Perdition* merely on account of Betraying his Lord; an Act in respect of which he appear's not to have been Free. On the Contrary, if consider'd in it's Connection, it appear's to import no more than his being preordain'd to be lost out of the number of the Disciples.

If our Saviour say's Luke 22. 22. *The Son of Man goeth as was determin'd, but wo to that Man by whom he is betrayd* &c., yet ev'n This can't Necessarily import the Sinfulness and Guilt of the Pure Act of Betraying; but may very wel be conceiv'd to be spoken with reference to those Concomitant Sins of Malice and Covetousness which our Saviour saw already harbour'd in the breast of *Judas*, who was then upon the point of putting it in Execution.

To conclude; If our Saviour, *Joh. 19. 11.* speaking to *Pilate* tell's him, *Thou couldest have no Power over me unless it was given thee from above; therefore he that deliver'd me unto thee hath the Greater Sin;* This is agree'd by Expositors to be meant of the Highpriest *Caiaphas* (who immediately deliver'd *Jesus* to *Pilate*) and not of *Judas*: Which *Caiaphas* by Maliciously delivering him may wel be said to have had Greater Sin than *Pilate*, who with only a Criminal Weakness and Compliance order'd his Execution; especially since *Pilate* without that Action of *Caiaphas* could have had no Power over him.

But tho' this appear's to have been the Case of *Judas* and, perhaps, of the Persons chiefly concern'd in our Saviour's Crucifixion; yet a like Predetermination isn't Necessary to be suppos'd in All Other Actions and Events appearing in their Immediate Circumstances to be Evil, which are mention'd in the Scripture-prophefys; much less in All Actions and Events whatsoever, as Some assert, but only in Cases Extraordinary, certainly Foretold, and of Importance to Mankind. For 'tis agree'd that a Prophecy (tho' Absolutely and Particularly exprest) may be no sufficient Argument of the Certainty of an Event. Such was the Prophecy of *Jonah* against *Nineveh*. And such was that of the Captivity of the Jewish Nation and the Destruction of *Jerusalem* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, Tho' the Terms were Absolute yet a Tacit Condition (viz Repentance) is known to have been imply'd. From whence we may infer it as a Good Rule in interpreting Prophefys of Future Impietys and Judgments, in All Ordinary Cases, That a Condition is Ever to be Understood, tho' not Exprest, unless when Preceding Impietys may be presum'd to have arriv'd at such a Daring Height as to have provok't the Just Governor of the World to abandon the Rebellious to their Folly and Punishment.

Other Prophefys of this Sort (for a Prophecy isn't always of Future Things) are no other than Revelations of what God the Searcher of Hearts knew to be Actually Existent. For Example; When *David* askt Counsel of
 God

God whether he should go down to *Keilah*, and whether in that Case the Men of the place would deliver him up to *Saul*, God answer's, *They wil deliver thee up*. This need's not signify that God had Decree'd their delivering him; but only that he knew their Purpose, at that time, was to deliver him up if he went. So when *Ezekiel* receiv'd his Commission to terrifie the *Jews* from their Evil Practices, God presently add's, *The House of Israel wil not hearken to thee*, i: e: , I know their Present Resolution is Not to Obey. For if these Words must be understood to Import a Certainty of the Event by virtue of a Preceding Decree, then those most Pathetical Invitations to *turn and live*, which are afterwards made'em in the Name of God, would be sufficiently Unaccountable. And thus, as to the Prophecy of the Rise and Progress of *Antichrist*, That perhaps do'sn't necessarily import any more than that the Searcher of Hearts, who knew the *Mystery of Iniquity* began already to work (as the Apostle intimate's) would, partly for a Tryal and Warning to his People and partly as a Punishment to the Offenders if they Obstinately persisted, permit the Evil to proceed til it might meet it's appointed Punishment. Which sort of Prophetical Threatnings may be consider'd as the Means which the Supreme Governour (as a most Wise Physician) sometimes uses either for the Prevention or Cure of those Diseases to which the Whole Political Body or any Part of it is expos'd. And tho' in the *Revelations* we have a Declaration of the Method design'd by the Lord of the World for executing his Judgments on *Antichrist* and his Followers in a certain Order according to several Periods; yet This perhaps may have only been foretold Conditionally (viz in Case the Evil should spread and become Inveterate;) or the Prophecy might not be design'd to take effect in Every respect; (at least not with respect to the Continu'd Impiety and Final Destruction of the Subjects) unless their Obstinacy should provoke the Beneficent Deity no otherwise to put a stop to those Impiety's than by the Destruction of the Offenders at the time prefixt. For tho' it be said to be a Revelation of Things *which Must shortly come to pass*; yet these

Words aren't more Absolute than those of God by the Prophet *Jonah*, which denounc'd Destruction to the *Ninevites* within forty days.

And as it appear's by the Former Instances that an Interruption of the State of Tryal by a Determination (in Some Extraordinary Cafes) to Acts seeming in their Immediate Circumstances Evil, may be sufficiently consistent with the Wisdom of the Divine Government; so a like Interruption by a Restraint from Actions Absolutely Evil, or a Determination to such as are in the Completest Sense Good, may, in Some Particular Cafes, be highly Worthy of it. Of Both which Uncontestable Instances might easily be produc't.

10. *An Obstinate and Impenitent Offender in such a State of Tryal can have no sufficient Plea against the Execution of the Penalty which the Just Governour of the World may have decree'd for his Offence.*

Not the Imperfection of his Nature. For to be Perfect and Immutable are the Incommunicable Prerogatives of the Independent Being. Imperfection is as Essential to Creatures as Dependence. And should it be admitted as a Plea against Punishment in case of Transgression, it might as wel be admitted as an Argument against All Government by Laws. On the Other Side, 'tis manifest that a Creature furnisht with Reason join'd with a Knowledge of his Duty and with Liberty to Act it, is a sufficiently Perfect or Capable Subject of Such Government. If Such a Creature offend, it must be either through a Culpable Inadvertency in a Greater or Lesser degree, or else through an Unreasonable Obstinacy. But Neither of these ought to be resolv'd entirely into the Imperfection of his Nature, but chiefly into a Wilful Degeneracy and Depravation of it. Tho' it must, I think, be confest that if a Creature be under the Influence of Invincible Ignorance, or if his Reason and Liberty are Otherwise without his fault, incapable of due Exercise, he appear's in these Circumstances to be no Capable Subject of Government by Laws, and by consequence neither Liable to Rebellion nor Punishment.

Nor

Nor can a mere *Dependence on the Sustentation of his Maker* be justly pleaded to excuse him from such a Penalty. 'Tis to be confess'd that if the Doctrine of an Universal Sustentation should conclude the Deity to be the Immediate Principle of All Action, and by consequence should be found to exclude a Selfdetermining Power in the Creatures, the very Notion of Government by Laws must cease, For if the Whole Intelligent Creation have no Proper Action of their Own, but are entirely manag'd and actuated by the Divine Power, then the most Serious Affairs of the World must be regarded as a mere Ludicrous Scene or Dance of Puppets. A Set of Beings Capable of the Knowledge of their Duty but Destitute of the Ability to Act it, must be less Capable Subjects of Government by Laws than the Intelligent Trees in the Fabulous *Dodona's* Grove.

But if the Sustentation of the Being of a Creature be conceiv'd Inconsistent with a Selfdetermining Power in order to Action, it must be either on Supposition that the Deity *could not* produce and preserve such a Distinct Power in a Creature in consistence with Such a Sustentation, or else that *he would not*. As for the Former Supposition, 'tis sufficient to observe that no good Reason can be assign'd why the Production of a Distinct Power should be thought less Possible than the Creation of a Distinct Substance. And as the Deity Sustain's or Preserve's the Substance of his Creatures so as that it stil remain's (notwithstanding the most Intimate Penetration) sufficiently distinguish'd from his Own (as was prov'd;) so by parity of Reason, he may as wel be suppos'd to Sustain or Preserve the Power of a Creature so as that it may stil retain it's Distinction and Capacity of becoming a Proper Principle of Action. And as for the Latter Supposition, viz, That the Deity *would not* Produce and Preserve such a Selfdetermining Power in a Creature; 'tis a Sufficient Confutation to remark that it's Irreconcilable to the Notion of a Perfectly Wise Being (such as is the Deity) to suppose him to Act without any Valuable End or Design. But to impart a Capacity to Know our

Duty without bestowing an Ability to Execute it would have been to impart it for no Wise or Valuable End. And Can we entertain so Mean an Idea of the Wisest as well as Greatest of Beings as to imagin he would raise this Glorious Structure of the World only to serve as a Scene for Intelligent Machins to be mov'd and actuated in, and that, for the most part, in so Ridiculous and Insignificant a Manner, for no other End than to divert himself with the trifling Spectacle!

11. *To suppose that the Great Governour of the World should Finally Punish or Afflict the purely Innocent, or Acquit, or Reward the obstinately Guilty, is by no means reconcileable to our Idea of the most Perfect Government.*

This we have already observ'd to be clear from the Perfection of the *Wisdom* of the Great Author and Manager of this Government. We may, I confess, in sufficient Consistence with this Attribute of the Supreme Being, conceive him, for the Good of the World and of the Person himself, to afflict a purely Innocent Subject for a time; but not either without Reason, or so as Finally or Eternally to abandon him to Misery by him Undeserv'd. Thus, tho' the Innocent *Jesus* suffer'd, yet 'twas both for the Universal Good of Mankind and in order to a Glorious Reward. And thus, in a Case somewhat different, tho' the Deity be in the Scripture represented as sometimes visiting the Offences of the Fathers on their Posterity, Yet 'tis only by Temporal Afflictions, and in order to the far Greater Good of Mankind in General; to whom such Severe Executions may serve as a Warning to avoid the like Offenses.

12. *Lastly, 'Tis alike Agreeable to the Character of the Supreme Governour both to Punish the Finally Impenitent and to Pardon and Reward the Penitent and Virtuous.*

To make this appear it's conceiv'd we need do little more than fix the True Reason of Rewards and Punishments.

That the Rewards bestow'd by the Creator on his Creatures are not the Result of any Proper *Merit* in Them, nor his

his Punishments the Effects of *Passion* in Himself, is evident. Our most Perfect Acts of Piety can't be said to deserve or to be Equivalents to the Favour of God; nor can our most Enormous Impietys be any Real Detriment to him (as we before observ'd) or capable of exciting in him *Passionate* Emotions or an Appetite of Revenge. For what Benefit or Disadvantage can it be to a Prince to be either Obey'd or Disobey'd by an Insect? But the Disparity between the Creator and the most Noble of his Creatures is inconceivably Greater.

Nor is *Justice* or Equity (as we hinted before) to be conceiv'd as a Distinct Essential Property in God which is the *Immediate* Reason of Rewards and Punishments. For if we consider, 'twil appear to be no other than a Notion of our Minds deriv'd from our Observation of the Methods and Effects of the Divine Wisdom in the Government of the Rational World. For when the Wisdom of The Supreme Governour is conceiv'd to incline him either to Punish or Reward with a due Regard to the State of his Subjects, we properly give him the Title of *Just*. But if we say that the Deity was Essentially Just (before any Object of Justice existed) we speak Improperly, and can mean no more than that his Wisdom, which incline's him to exert the Acts to which we give the Title of *Just*, is Essentially Perfect and Uniform and must Immutably have produc't Effects worthy it's Self. The like may be said of his *Faithfulness*, which is in effect a Species of Justice.

And as for the *Essential Holiness* of the Deity, which is usually represented as the *Original* Reason of Rewards and Punishments, or as that which determin's his Justice to exert it's Acts; it can (as was likewise observ'd) signify nothing else but the General Indetermin'd Rectitude or Perfection of his Wisdom immutably inclining him to act in the most Beneficent and Regular Manner. Hence it proceed's that to assert that God by a Mere Act of Dominion, or without the least Regard either to the State of Particular Persons or the Good of the Community, can Punish or Afflict the purely Innocent or Acquit and Reward the obstinately Rebellious, is inconsistent with the

Notion of his Holiness. For this is in effect to affirm him capable of Acting Irregularly and Cruelly, for None or for an Unwise End.

We may then conclude that *Holiness* and *Justice* (as distinguished from the Divine *Wisdom*) are not the Proper Reasons of Rewards and Punishments. To discover which we can, perhaps, use no better Method than to consider the Great End of the Divine Government.

Now, the Primary End or Design of the Deity in Governing the World we may be assur'd can be no other than that which he immediately propos'd in it's Creation; viz, The Exercise of his Wisdom and his Other Perfections in order to the Welfare and Happiness of his Creatures: Which End may well be regarded as the Rule of All his Consequent Acts.

Wherefore, in proving the Equal Congruity or Finess of Punishments in case of Transgression, and of Rewards and Pardon in case of Obedience and Repentance, it seem's we have nothing else to do but to make it appear that the Great End of the Alwise Creator is Equally serv'd by These Means.

To clear this, we may first reflect a little upon the Nature of Transgression, Sin, or Moral Evil, and of the Guilt or Obligation to Punishment which result's from it.

We have already observ'd that Moral Evil can't consist in being any Real Detriment to the All-sufficient Deity, and by consequence that the Reason of Punishment is not his Sense of Detriment or an Appetite of Revenge.

On the Contrary, we have perceiv'd that it chiefly consist's in being an Extreme Detriment to the Creatures. And that in Two Respects; viz, by rendering'em most Unlike their Creator, and by directly tending to frustrate the Great Design of his Wisdom in the Government of the World, viz, their Welfare and Happiness: Which Design we may be assur'd he constantly pursue's and promote's as far as can be effected by such Methods as may any way consist with the Government of Free Agents.

We shal now consider Moral Evil in it's Full Latitude with reference to Both these Notions, to the end we
may

may be qualify'd to make the more Certain Estimate of it's Guilt.

In it's Former Notion, viz, That of a mere Dissimilitude or Unlikeness to the Divine Perfection, abstracting from it's Consequences, the Appearance of it's Evil and Guilt is, without dispute, proportionably less according to the Diminishing Circumstances that attend it. Our Understandings are often Unavoidably misinform'd and misguided. The Light of Truth which discover's our Duty do'sn't always shine with Equal Vigour in our Minds; but is often either obscur'd by Clouds of Melancholy and the thick Dust of Prejudice, or refracted by the Storm and Tumult of Passion. There's often a Great Degree of Ignorance and Prejudice in the Minds of the Wisest and most Virtuous. For as it's manifest that the Wisest and Best of Men aren't without their Faults, so 'tis certain that a Rational Nature can't easily resolve obstinately to act in direct opposition to the Clear Evidence of Reason and Interest. Which Circumstances as they represent the Act to be often more Excusable because less Free, so they can't but cause the Evil and Guilt to appear proportionably less when so consider'd.

But then if we consider Sin, or Moral Evil, in it's Latter Notion, viz, as attended with it's Proper Consequences, or as having a Direct Tendency to frustrate the Great Design of God; as the Evil more clearly appear's, so the Guilt or Obligation to Punishment can't but appear to be Greater in Proportion. For as the Chief End that Perfect Wisdom propos'd in the Creation and Government of the World can't but be the Greatest Good (as being the Fittest that could be either propos'd or imagin'd;) so That which Naturally and Directly tend's to frustrate this End must, by consequence, come under the Notion of the *Greatest of Evils*.

'Tis a plain Inference from hence, That the Exercise or, Admission of the Proper Natural Means either of *Preventing* or *Rémedying* this Greatest of Evils is become no less Necessary to the Wise and most Beneficent Governour of the World than was the Choice and Proposal of the Greatest Good,

Good. Now these Means are *Rewards* and *Punishments*, *Repentance* and *Amendment of Life*.

That no Natural Means can be imagin'd more directly to tend to the *Preventing* this Evil and, consequently, to the Attaining the Chief End of the Wise and Beneficent Governour of the World, than the Allurements of *Rewards* and the Terrours of *Punishments*, is I think too clear to be doubted. Virtue is, indeed, in Some respects, it's Own Reward; and Vice, since it Naturally tend's to make us Unhappy, may be said to be it's Own Punishment. But of this we are usually very little Sensible, or Possess with an Opinion of the Contrary. We find by Experience that the Inward Satisfaction which spring's from Acts of Charity and Humanity would prove but a faint Encouragement to Most men without the Hope of Glory and Applause, or some Other Recompense. And on the Contrary, the Regret which attend's an Ill or Barbarous Action would be very Ineffectual to restrain a Robber or a Murtherer Without the Additional Terrour of a Wheel or a Gibbet. For which reason the Scriptures accommodate themselves to our Insensibility, and rouse us from our Lethargy by all the Charms of Happiness and Terrours of Misery. They promise us no less than an Eternity of *Happiness* in a Future State as a Reward for our endeavouring to render our Selves and Others Happy by our Obedience in the Present State. And tho' we should perswade our selves that the Account the Scriptures give us of the Severity and Endless Duration of the State of *Misery*, with which they threaten Disobedience, was propos'd to us by the most Wise Governour of the World only for the better securing the most Beneficent Ends of his Government by striking a Greater Terrour into the less Sensible Part of Mankind; yet we may not doubt but the Difference between those Two States will be such as shal (at least) make the Necessary Compensation for the Present Unequal Distribution of Things. Of this the very Heathens were generally convinc'd. Their *Metamorphoses*, *Transmigrations*, and the severe Sentences and Executions of the Inexorable Judges in *Tartarus* were

were no other than Hypotheses invented to serve the honour of the Divine Government in the Present State. And Some of 'em observing how little Impression the Severest Penalties, when under the notion of Future, are wont to make on the minds of men, have ev'n concluded it Necessary to represent the Miserys of the Future State of Punishment not only as the most Intolerable but as Endless and Irremediable. Of this the *Epicurean Poët Lucretius* is an Unexceptionable Witness, who pretend's the Fear of *Eternal* Punishments to have been the Original of All Religion.

This is plainly the Case with reference to Rewards and Punishments. We shal now proceed to consider the Nature of *Repentance* and *Amendment of Life*. And if These can be prov'd to have as Natural a Tendency to the *Remedying* the Evil of Sin as Rewards and Punishments to the *Preventing* it 'twil it's conceiv'd sufficiently appear that they are no less Conducive to the Great End of the Divine Government and, by consequence, that they not only may but must be consider'd as Natural Conditions of Pardon. For we may be assur'd that the Alwise Governour of the World can't but admit and encourage the Natural Means of Remedying That Evil which is directly Opposit to and Inconsistent with the Chief Good of his Subjects. To prove this we shal again take a view of Sin in Both it's Notions, and endeavour to show how Naturally Repentance and Amendment of Life tend to the Remedying it in Both Respects.

We have observ'd that the First Notion of Sin is that of a *Dissimilitude to the Divine Perfection*. This in the Scripture-style is sometimes signify'd by *Filth*, *Pollution*, and *Uncleanness*. Wherefore that which Naturally tend's to Remedy it's Evil must be somewhat which may be said to *Cleanse* and *purify* us and thereby to restore us to the Likeness and Resemblance of the Deity. This Repentance and Amendment most certainly do. Our Resemblance to God in the Government of our Actions (which alone is here to be consider'd) must consist in our Imitation of his Governing Perfection, his Wisdom, or (which we have

have observ'd to be in effect the Same) his *Holiness*. Which Imitation (or rather the Habit from which it proceed's) is chiefly what the Scriptures call *the Divine Image*. If therefore when we commit Sin we act Unwisely and thereby (in the Scripture-style) Pollute our Natures and Impair or Deface the Divine Image in our Souls; it follow's that when (by the Divine Assistance) we Repent and Turn from it to the Contrary Course, we do the Wisest and most Beneficent Act that our Nature, in Those Circumstances, is capable of; and that by a Sincere Continuance therein we recover our former State with respect to Purity, or reassume so much of our Maker's Image or Resemblance as by our Follies we had lost.

The Other Notion of Sin we observ'd to be a *Contrariety to the Divine Perfection*, or a Tendency to frustrate the Great Ends of the Divine Wisdom in the Government of the World. In This respect the Scriptures sometimes style it *Enmity* and *Hatred*: By which Words, in a Tropical Sense, it's Evil is very wel exprest. For tho we assert that no man can be said in a Proper Sense to Hate or to bear an Enmity to God as God, or as having a True Notion of him, yet Sin (at least) consist's in the Commission of such Actions as have a Direct Opposition to his Great End or Design; such as those of an Enemy are wont to have. And as Sin (in Both it's Notions) reduce's the Sinner to a State of Guilt or Obligation to Punishment, so 'tis sometimes in the Scripture represented under the Similitude of a *Debt*. Now, if we consider Sin in this Second Notion of it 'twil, perhaps, appear that Repentance and Amendment of Life no less Naturally tend to Remedy it's Evil, and by consequence that they are Naturally qualify'd to be Conditions of Pardon. For These have evidently a Direct Tendency to the Accomplishment of the Great End of God, and by inclining men to Acts agreeable to the Divine Nature and Wil, and thereby changing their State with reference to the Great Lawgiver, they may be said to Reconcile 'em to him, and (if not to dissolve their Obligation to Punishment yet) to qualify 'em for an Interest in that Satisfaction which effectually do's it.

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But here it may be objected that Faith in the Saviour of the World is in the Scriptures joyn'd with Repentance and Amendment of Life as a Condition of Equal Necessity in order to Pardon.

But to This may be reply'd. That tho' Faith in our Saviour both Was and Is Necessary to Such as either heard or do hear the Sound of the Gospel-revelation, yet the Case of Such as liv'd before his Incarnation (a very Few excepted) was, it seem's, very different: Since Faith in a Future Redeemer was, for ought appear's, never expressly requir'd of Them as a Condition of Pardon. Whereas Repentance and Amendment were Ever so requir'd both by the Natural and Reveal'd Law. We have here been treating only of the Natural Congruity or Fitness of Repentance and Amendment to qualify for Pardon. But tho' This should be admitted, 'twil by no means follow that no Other Condition could in any Case become Necessary. For none can justly doubt but the Supreme Governour was Free to suspend the Benefits of our Saviour's Merits and Satisfaction on Other Conditions besides the Natural ones; especially on so reasonable a Condition as that of Faith in the Great Author of it when Clearly Reveal'd. But this do'sn't hinder but that the Performance of the Natural Conditions may still be Sufficient to qualify Such as never heard of that Satisfaction for a Share in it's Benefits.

Thus much may have been enough with reference to the Government of Particulars as such. The Wisdom of God in the Government of *Communitys* may, it's conceiv'd, be sufficiently clear'd by the Following Propositions.

1. *God is the Author of Political Society; as having qualify'd Some Creatures for it, and implanted an Inclination to it.*

'Twas the Notion of Mr. *Hobbes* (deriv'd from the *Epicureans*) that the Natural State was a *State of War*. But the Innate Principle of Selflove, which incline's not only Men but the very Brutes to consult their Own Security, and not to assault Others unless for Selfpreservation; the Natural Affection between the Sexes, so strongly disposing 'em to unite in Society; the Natural Inclination of All Animals of
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the Same Species to each other; and, Lastly, the Natural Methods of communicating their Inclinations or Affections, but especially the Faculty of Speech for which Men were so Peculiarly fram'd, and by which they are render'd more Sociable than Other Animals; are Sufficient Confutations of that Fancy.

2. *The Immediate End of Society is the Present Good.*

As the End of the Supreme Governour in his Government of Particular Persons as such, is most rationally concluded to be chiefly their Future Good, and their Present no otherwise than as Conducive to or, at least, Consistent with That; so in the Association and Government of Communitys, 'tis principally their Present Good. This is clear from those Principles of Society implanted in our Natures; which have All an Immediate Tendency either to the procuring Present Advantage or the warding off Impending Evils.

Hence it partly happen's that tho', in the Government of Particular Persons, Rewards and Punishments are usually reserv'd entirely to the Future State, on the Contrary, Such Societys as most industriously promote or oppose the True Ends of Government are commonly Recompens'd in This. As we shal have occasion more Particularly to remark hereafter.

3. *From the Complication and Interfering of these Two Governments (viz, of Particulars and Communitys) distinguish'd by Two so Different Ends as are the Future and the Present Good, it necessarily proceed's that there must frequently be some Variety and seeming Irregularity in the Conduct and Methods of the Supreme Governour.*

For since the Chief Design of God may justly be concluded to be the Future Good of Particular Persons as such, no wonder if he sometimes postpone's the (Present) Good of Communitys when in Competition, as being in it's Self of far less Consequence.

4. *The Present or Future Good of a Few Particular Persons or Societys, being of less Consideration than the Present or Future Good of the Whole Community or Entire Humane Species, must Ever be conceiv'd to give place when in Competition.*

Hence

Hence it follow's that the Divine Conduct in the Government of the World is not to be measur'd by such Narrow Models as men are apt to frame; who (as My Lord Bacon observ's) are wont to Thrust themselves into the Centre of the World and to imagin that All Lines ought to meet in Them and their Fortunes. Every Wise Governour propos'd certain General Ends wick are chiefly to be promoted for the Publick Advantage, and to which All Private Interests must submit. Thus (to give an Instance in the Divine Government of the World:) since the erecting of mighty Monarchys could not but be a General Benefit in the Earlier Ages of the World, as tending in the most effectual manner to civilize the Rude and Barbarous People by the Propagation and Improvement of Religion and Arts; the Supreme Governour, partly for This reason and partly for a Punishment of the Vitious, hath frequently either Ordain'd or Permitted the Conquests of Nations: In which, for the most part, he ha's made use of the most Civiliz'd or, at least, the most Virtuous People as his Instruments. Thus 'tis observable that the *Babylonians, Egyptians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Getes, Chinese, Jews, and Mexicans*, who most extended their Conquests in their several Quarters, were either the most Polite or the most Virtuous Nations recorded in History. And tho' Enterprises of this Nature were not usually atchiev'd without the Great Damage and Destruction of Particular Persons yet such Inconveniencies were, for the most part, both less considerable than the Benefit that thereby accru'd to the Community, and fell most heavily on such as apparently deserv'd 'em most. And tho' the Good and the Bad have been ever so mixt together as that the Former could not sometimes without a Miracle escape a share in the Miserys of the Latter; yet the Best being more or less faulty, there could be no just Plea against the Administration of the Divine Government in this respect. Especially, if it be consider'd that a Temporal Destruction was to Them but a Surprise into Happiness, at the Same time that it to the Others was a Prelude to Future Miserys.

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ment of the Naked Defenseless *Americans* is so generally detested, may seem to yield no Inconsiderable Objection against the Observation we just now made. And this the rather deserv's our Notice because the Invention of Fire-arms (which facilitated the Conquest of that Vast Continent) immediately before it's Discovery, and the Concurrence of many Extraordinary Circumstances in the Discovery and Conquest themselves, seem to argue the Deity to have had a Particular Concern in that Affair.

Yet, admitting all this, 'tis humbly conceiv'd the Equity of the Divine Conduct is sufficiently clear. For as, on the one side, 'tis evident that those *Americans* (like the *Canaanites* of old) were become Impious Wretches, polluted with the blood of Humane Sacrifices, and guilty of the Grosslest Idolatry and Other Enormous Vices, so on the other side, it must be confest that tho' their Invaders probably exceeded their Commission by suffering their Pride and Avarice to prevail almost to the Extinction of Humanity (for which their Leaders appear to have receiv'd Exemplary Punishment) yet their Posterity have discover'd a very Commendable Zeal for the Converting and Civilizing those Barbarians. And, I think, it must be own'd that the Roman Religion (tho' sufficiently corrupt) was yet far preferable to that most abominable Superstition which had blinded those Unhappy People. And if we reflect upon the Advantages of that Religion in it's so near Resemblance of the Pagan Worship of Demons and Inferiour Deities, by which it the more easily insinuate's it's self among such as have been bred in a Superstition so little different, it may be consider'd as no unfit Introduction to a Purer Religion in Future Ages.

To this place may be reduc'd that Method of the Divine Government, us'd on certain Particular Occasions, which Some would represent as Unaccountable; I mean the Punishment of Princes by the Temporal Loss or Destruction of their Subjects. For as we may be assur'd that this is never without Sufficient Demerit in the Subjects themselves, so (since the Grandeur of Princes, which is supported by the Numbers and Riches of their Subjects,

is their most Tender and Sensible Part) it can't be doubted but it tend's most effectually to Their Reclamation on whose Conduct the Welfare of the Whole Humane Community so Immediately depend's. The like may be observ'd with reference to the Punishment of Parents by the Temporal Damage of their Posterity.

5. *'Twas highly Suitable to the Divine Wisdom in the Government of the World both to Preordain some of the Principal Events with relation to the Entire Humane Community or to the more Considerable Parts of it, and to reserve to himself a Right of Interposing and Influencing Particular Agents, as in Other Cases so more especially in order to the Accomplishment of Those Events.*

That he ha's actually done so is abundantly clear from the Scripture prophesys and Historys. And that in so doing he ha's acted in a manner most worthy his Wisdom, is no less manifest. For hereby it appear's that the Divine Government is equally oppos'd to *Chance* and *Destiny*. Had the Deity taken no care of Fururity but left every man to the Conduct of his own Inclinations, and Natural Effects in the General to the Immediate Influence of their Causes, without ever interposing to direct 'em to the Attainment of his Great Designs; this would have been almost in effect to divest himself of the Government of Rational Agents, and to subject their Affairs to Chance and to the Hazard of the utmost Disorder and Confusion. Or had he, on the contrary, Absolutely or Fatally determin'd Every Event, tho' this, I confess, would have been far enough from divesting himself of the Government of the World, yet it would have been a Government Unworthy the Deity, a Government entirely exclusive of all Proper Sin and Punishment, Virtue and Rewards; wherein Himself would in effect have been the only Agent, and All the Creatures Stupid and Passive. Whereas by preordaining the most Material Events, and suffering the Creatures freely to exert their Facultys in all Convenient Cases, he appear's most Wisely to have chosen the Middle Way and thereby to have equally avoided the Mischiefs of Both Extremes.

Again; If the Deity had left men in every Case to the Exercise of their Liberty, he could have giv'n no Proof of his Government of Humane Actions, and had he quite excluded Liberty by fatally determining Every Event, the Creatures could have giv'n no Proof of their Subjection and Obedience. Whereas by determining Some Events, and reserving to himself a Liberty of interposing in all Others, as he give's his intelligent Creatures sufficient Capacity and Opportunity in all Convenient Cases to evidence their Allegiance to him, so he procure's to Himself the Opportunity of making sensible Discoverys of his Sovereignty and actual Dominion over them and their Affairs; and at the same time of striking a deep sense of that Reverence and Duty which they owe him. This we find he ha's sometimes done by foretelling Future Events: and sometimes by his Palpable Interposition in the Affairs of the World by Miracles or Supernatural Effects. By both which Methods how much the Interests of Religion, and by consequence his Great Design in the Creation and Government of the World, have been advanc'd, may in some measure be conceiv'd by such as consider how much greater Impression Extraordinary and Miraculous Effects are apt to make on the minds of men than the Common and Dayly Results of Natural Causes; and how strongly most men are bent to search into Futurity; ev'n sometimes to the neglect of their Present Interests. For which reason we find the Wisdom of the Great Governour in this respect ha's been often imitated (whether by Demons or designing Priests we need not here determin) in the Pagan Oracles, as likewise in their Augurys and Divinations; by which Bold and Inquisitive men have presum'd to penetrate into those Secretes which none but the Deity could disclose.

6. *If, notwithstanding these most Prudent Methods of the Supreme Governour his Great End or Design (the Universal Good of his Creatures) doesn't appear to be advanc'd so constantly and Uniformly as might be expected where the most Perfect Wisdom ha's the Management and Direction; it deserv's to be remember'd that it's the Government of Free Agents,*

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who are, in most cases, to be the sole Determiners of their Actions.

There's no compelling men to be Virtuous, nor consequently to be Happy. For where there's Force of any Kind the very Notion of Virtue cease's. The Wisdom therefore of the Divine Conduct in the Government of the World could not, in Matters purely Moral, consist in a Constant Necessitating Influence on the minds of men and an entire Banishment of Evil out of the World; but must have discover'd it's self either in making a Prudent Provision against such Cross Events as might proceed from their Perverseness and Folly, or else in rendring Particular Evils (as far as is consistent with the Government of Free Agents) conducive to the Common Good. Both which Designs he evidently pursue's by the Methods before observ'd.

C H A P. XII

OUR Last Idea of the Divine Sufficiency or Perfection as it refer's to Other Beings as Actually Existent is that of Providence.

Our Idea of Providence we derive from the consideration of those Acts of the Divine Wisdom and Benevolence, proceeding from an exact Knowledge of the States or Conditions of his Creatures, whereby the Deity ha's Always more Immediately provided for their Preservation or Subsistence.

That God perfectly Know's whatever is in the World is plain; because he Created and stil Sustain's whatever is in the World. For 'tis equally absurd to say either that he Knew not what he created, or that he Know's not what he now Sustain's or continue's in Being.

As the Acts of Creation and Sustainment refer simply to the Existence of the Creatures, and those of Government to their State and Actions, so those of Providence (as here understood) refer to their Subsistence and Protection.

It ha's, I confess, been usual to conceive Providence with a Larger Extent, as including All the Acts of God

towards his Creatures consequent on their Creation. But as this is a very General Notion, and contain's a Complication of many and very different Ideas, which are thereby apt to be Confus'd and Indistinct, so both the Original Signification of the Word and it's Common Use both among Ancients and Moderns wil favour a more Restrain'd and Limited Sense.

Some Philosophers, under Colour of raising our Conceptions of the Divine Greatness and Majesty, have absolutely excluded a Providence in the Larger Sense of the Word. Others, conceiving the King of the World under the degrading Character of an Earthly Prince, have imagin'd that he ever commit's the Care of his Subjects to his Ministers or Deputy's. Others have Limited it to the Nobler Parts of the Creation, and abandon'd the Inferiour to Chance or the unmanag'd Influence of second Causes.

But as our *Reason* won't suffer us to doubt but that the Knowledge of God is Perfect and extend's to the Meanest of his Creatures, and his Power Almighty and Incapable of Fatigue; so 'twil assure us that nothing is by his Wisdom judg'd Unworthy his Care and Protection which by the same Wisdom was judg'd not unworthy his Creation.

Nor wil our *Experience* suffer us to doubt of the Reality and Universality of a Providence in the Present Notion of it. We shal instance in a few Particulars. And in so doing we shal avoid all such Effects of it as might with any Plausibility be suspected to be the Necessary Results either of the Original Structure of the World or of Particular Beings; to the End that there may be no just Pretense to elude the Evidence they may yield us of the Present and more Immediate Efficiency of such an Omnipotent and most Beneficent Being as we before discover'd.

'Twere endless to enumerate such Probable Instances of a Providence with reference to Particular Persons and Things as both our own Experience and the Historys of All Ages abound with. And we shal wholly omit 'em. Both because men are apt to be very Incredulous in Matters of this nature, and because there's no Perfect nor Constant Uniformity to be pretended (for Reasons easily

to be collected from what was observ'd when we discours'd of the Methods of the Divine Government) but whatever Instances can be produc't as Proofs of such a Particular Providence may be, perhaps, confronted by Others which seem to import the Contrary.

We shal therefore single out such Instances only in which we are either Universally concern'd, or with reference to which there can be no colourable Plea for Incredulity. Such we humbly conceive to be.

1. *The Continuation of the Gravitation of the Parts which compose the several Greater Bodys of the Universe towards their respective Centres, and of the Bodys themselves towards each other.* For this we have formerly prov'd to be no Effect of any Intrinick Property of Matter as such, but to be either a Mediate or Immediate Impression of the Divine Power. But *Gravity* is the only Cement which hold's the Parts of the World together: Without which that very Motion which we observe in some of those Vast Bodys (at present so Necessary to the Subsistence of Animals and Vegetables) would soon shatter and reduce 'em to a Chaos of Confusion and Deformity.

2. *The Continuation of the nice Adjustment of that Projectile Motion of the Planets of our Systeme to the Force of their Gravitation towards each other and the Sun.* How great an Instance this yield's us of a Providence wil easily appear to such as shal consider that without it All Things (as in the Former case) would hy degrees come to Confusion. The *Moon* and the *Earth*, *Jupiter* and it's *Satellites*, would either meet or fly off from each other to the Utmost Spaces of the Heavens. In short, the whole Planetary *Chorus* would soon either sink into the Sun and ly for ever broiling in that Vast Ocean of Fire, or else desert him and like Comets pay an Unwelcome Visit to the Remoter Parts of the World; to the Damage and perhaps Destruction of the Neighbouring Systemes.

3. *The Continuation of the Oblique Position of the Earth's Axis, by preventing such Alteration therein as might have happen'd either by the too near approach of Comets or the Influence of any Other Cause.* Without This the Useful and

Necessary Variety of Seasons would cease. The Sun's Heat would no where increase by those just Degrees necessary for the ripening of Fruits. The Greatest Part of the Earth would be expos'd to the rigours of a Perpetual Winter, while the Others would be parcht and burnt up by an Excess of Heat.

4. *The Regulation of the Winds* is another Proof of a Provident Deity. The frequent Variations of the Winds in most parts of the Earth demonstrate that they proceed from no uniform Mechanical Causes. Yet these are the Grand Instruments of Nature, on which the Preservation or Destruction of Animals and Vegetables more Immediately depend's. Which make's it necessary to conclude that a Perfectly Wise and Beneficent Deity (if any such) would not leave 'em entirely to Chance or the Ungovern'd Influence of their Immediate Causes, and thereby abandon his Creation to so manifest a Hazard. And we may be assur'd from Experience that he do'sn't. For did not some Superiour Principle sometimes Excite and Regulate their Motions, 'tis reasonable to believe the *Earth* would soon be reduc't to an Inanimate Heap and Hideous Solitude, The *Air* would soon become a Vast Receptacle of Infection and Blasting. The *Sea* would be no other than a Sink of Poyson and Noisomness. The *Land* would either become Barren for want of Moisture, or be laid waste by repeated Inundations.

Whereas, on the contrary, we find the Seasons of the Year are sufficiently distinguish'd. The Pestilential Steams of the Earth are dissipat'd. The Seas are preserv'd wholesome by Storms and Tempests. And the Air is refresh'd by Seasonable Breezes,

Which make's ev'n the *Variation* of the Winds a considerable Proof of the Superintendence of an Intelligent Cause. For were they every where Uniform and Periodical (like the Tradewinds that blow between the Tropicks) such Regularity and whatever good Effects it might produce would with some colour of Reason be suspected to proceed from the Necessary Constitution of the World; and consequently would yield no Sufficient or Convincing Proof

Proof of the Agency of an Intellectual Cause:

It must be own'd that the Acts of the Divine Government do sometimes interfere and cause a Variety in the usual Course of Providence. The Winds have not always been so regulated as to prevent Inundations, Pestilence, or Sterility. But then, the Divine Government as it make's so it solve's the Difficulty. The Credible Tradition of Former Ages (not to mention the suppos'd Effects and Relicts that are stil visible) will not suffer us to doubt of the Reality of the Universal Deluge. For This we have the concurrent Testimonys of the *Chaldeans*, *Egyptians*, *Phœnicians*, *Greeks*, and ev'n the *Americans* as well as of the *Jews*. But this both *Jews* and *Pagans* agree to have been the just Demerit of a Degenerate World. And ev'n then, 'twas no inconsiderable Instance of a Providence that in the midst of the General Desolation there should Any escape to refurnish the Earth with Inhabitants. And that the Lot should be cast on the Virtuous, while the Waters were ev'ry where triumphant over the Impious. Thus, (if we wil not believe *Moses*) *Ovid* from the Tradition of Former Ages assure's us of *Deucalion* (which appear's to be but another Name for *Noah*) and his Wife *Pyrtha*, that

Non illo melior quisquam nec amantior æqui

Vir fuit, aut illâ reverentior ulla Deorum.

Ne're liv'd a Better, Juster Man than He;

No'r liv'd a Woman more Devout than She.

And as for the rest of that Age, we have the Testimony of 'Historians as wel Profane as Sacred to assure us that they were extremely Degenerate and Vitious.

It must be likewise own'd that we sometimes hear of Famins and Pestilence. But then these seldom happen, are of small Extent, and are usually appropriated to the Circumstances either of the Countrey or it's Inhabitants. So that they are so far from yielding any Argument against the Reality of a Providence that they somerimes afford us a Proof of the Equity of the Divine Government.

These are the more General Proofs of the Existence of a Provident Deity. Some of the less General are it's humbly conceiv'd.

1. *The due Proportion between the Numbers of the Different Sexes of Animals.* This is very remarkable in Man, in whom it was most Necessary. The Proportion ha's been observ'd to be commonly either as 14 to 13 or as 16 to 15. The small Surplusage is so far from weakening this Proof of a Providence that it rather strengthen's and confirm's it; for by This, Provision is made against the Accidents to which the Males are chiefly expos'd. By these Methods in all Ages so great an Equality ha's been preserv'd between the Sexes as would have been absolutely unaccountable without the Supposition of a Providence. For had not a Providence concern'd it's self in this affair (whether we conceive the Rudiments of the Humane Body to be Originally contain'd in the Egg, as are those of Plants in their Seeds; or whether we suppose it to proceed from some Animalcule of the Male Sperm, as is most likely; yet) since the Ovary of the Female must be conceiv'd to contain Variety of Eggs of either Sort; and since the Animalcules of the Male Sperm are observ'd to be so Numerous; 'twas very possible, in Either case, that the Disproportion between the Males and Females might, at some time or other, have been so great as very much to diminish, if not entirely to Extinguish, the Species.

2. *The Prevention of the Confusion of Species by Unnatural Mixtures* is Another Proof of a Provident Deity. Without This, the Face of Nature might, by degrees, have been almost entirely chang'd, and many of those Signatures of Divine Wisdom, which at present discover themselves in the Regular Frame and Constitution of Animals, effac'd. The World might have been fill'd with *Minotaurs*, *Harpies*, and *Chimera's*. And these might have been infinitely blended together into all the Shapes of Hideous Deformity. The Man and the Brute might have been no longer distinguishable; and Reason might have been very much impair'd, if not lost, in the Unequal Mixture. For we find no such strong and uniform Inclination in Animals

imals of the Same Species to each other, or Aversion to those of a Different one, as wholly to prevent Promiscuous Copulation. We are assur'd that in *Africa* especially, where the excessive Heats and Droughts oblige Beasts of Different Kinds to meet at Watering-places, they by degrees become familiar, and often produce Monsters; for which *Africa* was ever remarkable. But these, like Meteors, soon disappear. The Divine Providence so ordering that they want the Means of Propagating their Anomalous Kinds; which are Ever extinct in the Individual. Of this Mules are a known Instance,

3. *The Invariableness of Seeds* is another no less considerable Instance of a Providence. This is usually seen in Animals, when the ordinary Course of Nature is observ'd. But 'tis most remarkable in Plants, where most necessary. Otherwise, what was wholesome Food or Physick in One Age might have become Poison in Another. Whereas such Descriptions of the Virtues and Propertys of Plants as have been left us by the Ancients are found exactly agreeable to the Experience of the Present Age. And yet, the Slight Texture of the Innumerable Parts of Seeds, the Difference of Soils, and the Variety of Accidents to which they are expos'd may wel render such an Agreement Unaccountable without the Supposition of a Providence.

4. To add no more. *The due Proportion of the Numbers of Animals and Vegetables by the equal Prevention of their too great increase and Destruction*, is an Argument of a Providence. Thus, notwithstanding the great Consumption by Wars and Other Accidents yet the Number of Mankind in every Age not only equal's but exceed's that of the Former. And, which is more remarkable, the increase is in such a Gradation as bear's a Proportion to the Gradual Invention of Arts and Improvement of the Methods of Living.

And as for Other Animals, their Propagation is observ'd to be Ever proportionable both to the Length of their Lives and the Accidents to which they are more peculiarly subject. Thus, the Doe, which live's long, breed's,

breed's, after eight Months Pregnancy but One or, at the most, but Two. Whereas, the Fox, which live's ordinarily but Six or Eight Years, breed's Four in a much shorter time. The like may be observ'd of the several Sorts of Vegetables. And in the General', it may be remarkt, thas Beasts multiply more than Men, Fowls than Beasts, Fishes than Fowls, Insects and Vegetables than Fishes. Which they severally do in a fit Proportion to their Decay and Consumption. By which Uniform Course of Providence both the Species are preserv'd and yet the World is not overstockt with Inhabitants.



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IMPARTIAL ENQUIRY

INTO THE EXISTENCE AND

NATURE OF GOD:

Being a MODEST ESSAY towards a more
INTELLIGIBLE ACCOUNT of the
DIVINE PERFECTIONS.

With REMARKS on several AUTHORS
both ANCIENT and MODERN.

BOOK THE SECOND.

By Sa C. *author* Esq.

*Dedit Omnibus Deus pro virili portione Sapientiam, ut &
Inaudita investigare possent & Audita perpendere. Lactan-
tius Lib. 2. Divinarum Inst. Cap. 8.*

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BOOK THE SECOND.

Part the First.

OF THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

IN the Former Book we made it our Endeavour to discover such Principles of Reason as might yield Conviction to our Selves, without being very Solicitous about the Sentiments of Others. In This Discourse we shal proceed to make some Enquiry into the commonly-receiv'd Opinions, to the end that having clearly comprehended the Agreement or Disagreement, we may be the better qualifi'd to determin upon the Parallel.

Which we, perhaps, shal successsfully do, if we agree equally to suspect such Opinions as shal tempt us either to think Meanly of the Deity, or else to affect an Abstruse
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and Unintelligible Sublimity. The Latter of which appears to be the more dangerous Extreme. For few men find themselves inclin'd to receive Little Degrading Ideas of the Best and Noblest of Beings; whereas, on the contrary, the Prospect of so Glorious an Object so vehemently strike's the Spirits that it's apt to unfix the most Sedate Minds and to dissolve our Reason into Rapture and Enthusiasm.

We shal reduce our Enquiry to Three General Divisions. In the First we shal treat of the *Existence* of God. In the Second of the *Infinity* or *Immensity* of his *Essence*. And in the Third we shal treat of what is usually call'd the *Infinity* of his *Duration*. Under these Three Divisions we conceive may be comprehended whatever shal appear necessary to be added on this Subject.

To begin with the *Existence* of God. This we humbly conceive ha's been so firmly prov'd in the Former Book as to admit of no reasonable Doubt. Wherefore, the Cause being already sufficiently secur'd, 'twil be no Disadvantage, but a Considerable Service to it to detect the Fallacy and Weakness of some Other Pretended Proofs that have been employ'd to support it.

Epicurus having rejected All other Arguments for the Existence of a God, and in effect only preserv'd the Name of *God* in his Philosophy, was yet willing to retain One Proof, viz, That deriv'd from the Univerſality of his Idea. For he pretended that, antecedently to Instruction and the Exercise of Reason, by a sort of Anticipation of the Use of his Facultys, Every man had in his Mind an Idea of a Divine Being.

I confess I have always thought we had reason to suspect the Gifts of Enemys: Who if they can once perswade us to cast away our Weapons and to defend our selves with such Others as they please to bestow upon us, wil not easily fail of Victory. For whatever Bustle ha's of late been made with this Argument of *Epicurus*, it seem's to me to be capable of yielding very little Assistance to the Cause of a Deity.

Had *Epicurus* lookt upon the Idea of God as a Result of Reason and Enquiry, 'tisto be own'd he might have drawn
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a Probable Argument from it's Universality to prove his Existence : That being, without dispute, most highly reasonable to be believ'd which in All Ages and Nations has been believ'd by the most Wary and Disinterested Reasoners as well as Others. But this was none of his Meaning. For 'tis agree'd that he suppos'd this Idea as Innate or Connatural, not as the Pure Result of Reason.

Or had he been able to prove but the *Reality* of such an Innate Idea, it might have been admitted as a good Argument with such as assert either a Creation or Formation of the World by a Provident and Beneficent Cause. For, supposing such an Universal Innate Idea to be Real, 'twou'd be altogether Unaccountable from whence it should have proceeded unless from the Author of Nature. But, upon the Principles of *Epicurus*, it could stil have been no Proof who could conceive it no otherwise than as the Effect of Stupid Unintelligent Matter and Fortuitous Motion, and whose Idea of a God included no such Attributes as Providence or Beneficence.

From whence 'tis clear that, since this pretended Argument could have no Rational Effect upon *Epicurus*, it follow's that when he said he admitted a God because of the Universality of his Idea or the *Consent of Nations*, he could in effect mean no Other than that he suppos'd the Existence of some Divine Being only because the Supposition was Fashionable and Popular, and because the Contrary might have expos'd him to Censure and Punishment.

But that there is indeed such an Idea in the Mind of any man antecedently to Instruction and Reasoning do's neither appear by our Experience of our Selves, nor is capable of Proof from our Observation of Others : Which yet are the only possible ways of Proving it. For Tradition and Instruction usually make such Early Impressions as to prevent the least Reflection upon any such Innate Idea. And as it admit's of no Proof from Experience, so it's sufficiently confuted by it. For we find that Such as receive either None or but some Imperfect Notices of a Deity from Tradition or Reasoning have either no Idea of him

at all, or but such a Corrupt or Imperfect one as sufficiently correspond's to their Means of Information. And this, I take it, is abundantly clear from the Credible Accounts of Travellers.

Des Cartes, after the Example, thô I will not say with the Design, of *Epicurus*, having equally discarded all the usual Proofs of the Divine Existence, think's he ha's sufficiently supply'd their room with Two Demonstrations drawn from the Nature of the Same suppos'd *Innate Idea*. And This Topick ha's since become fruitful of Arguments.

One Argument of *Des Cartes* is to this Effect. An Attribute which we clearly and distinctly perceive to be included in the Idea of a Thing may be truly affirm'd of that Thing. But the Idea which we find implanted in our Minds of a Deity or Perfect Being plainly include's Necessity of Existence: For This, being without dispute a Perfection, can't but be contain'd in the Idea of That Being which is conceiv'd to possess All Perfections. Consequently, we may truly affirm that God, or a Perfect Being Necessarily exist's: It being a Proposition which is Selfevident.

It were to be wisht that this Pretended Demonstration was as solid as 'tis Specious and Surprising. But I fear it never yet had the Proper Effect of Demonstration on any Considering Man by entirely removing All Doubts and Scruples upon this Great Point. We shal give it a few Thoughts.

And, in the First place, we may observe that there are many Propositions which are Selfevident and Indisputable; viz, All such whose Terms are necessarily connected and signifie the very same Idea either in Whole or in Part. So This Proposition, *A Man is a Rational Being*, is Selfevident. For there's none who understand's the Terms but must immediately assent to it's Truth; since these Terms *A Man* and *A Rational Being* (in the Strictest sence) signify the very same Idea.

Again, The Truth of such Propositions may be observ'd not to depend on the Existence of their Subjects. For it
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the Idea signifi'd by the Terms was Fixt, they were Necessarily to be affirm'd of each other tho' the Thing signifi'd by the Idea had no Existence. Which Sort of Truth we may properly enough distinguish by the name of *Ideal* or *Notional Truth*; because not founded on the Existence of the Thing signifi'd by the Idea, but on the Existence of the Idea in the Mind of Some Intellectual Being and on the Fixt Conformity of the Terms to That Idea.

In the next place, it may be observ'd, that as there's a *Notional Truth of Propositions*, consisting in the Fixt Conformity of the Terms to the Idea existing in the Mind, so there's a *Real Truth of Ideas*, consisting in the Conformity of the Idea to the Object or Thing signifi'd or represented by it. This Truth is of a quite different Kind from the Notional Truth; and the Notional Truth (as we before observ'd) may be very wel without it. For example, This Proposition, *A Man is a Rational Being*, might be Notionally True, i: e: The Terms might be Fixt and Conformable to the Notion or Idea of a *Man* in the Mind of some Other Intellectual Being tho' no such Creature as a *Man* were existent in Nature. These Things, I take it, are so clear as not to need any further Illustration.

To apply this to the Present Case.

We own that the Proposition, *God Necessarily exist's*, or which is all one, *God is Necessarily existent*, is a Selfevident Proposition like the Former. For there's None who ha's an Idea pf a *God* or *Perfect Being* and of *Necessary Existence* but must immediately perceive the Connection of these Terms; since the Words *God* and a *Necessarily existent Being* signify, in part, the very Same Idea.

It must therefore be own'd that This Proposition ha's a Necessary Notional Truth; i: e:, The Idea of *God* and of *Necessary Existence* being fixt, the Terms of this Proposition must consequently be affirm'd of each other, viz, *God is Necessarily-existent* and a *Necessarily-existent Being is God*.

But then it may be observ'd that this Notional Truth (which is all that can be infer'd from one Term's and Idea's being necessarily connected with and included in
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another) do'sn't by any means demonstrate the Real Truth, or the Existence of an Object or Being conformable to those Terms and Ideas. As appear's by the Former Instance.

From whence 'tis manifest that the First and Main Proposition of *Des Cartes's* Demonstration [viz, An Attribute which was clearly and distinctly perceiv'd to be included in an Idea may be truly affirm'd of the Thing signifi'd by that Idea] is false. For an Attribute may be clearly included in an Idea and may by consequence be truly affirm'd of it, when yet it can't be affirm'd of any Thing signifi'd by that Idea. For as the Idea (if a Complex one, and capable of being form'd or compos'd by the Imagination) may wel be withour the Thing it's suppos'd to signify, so Many Propositions may be true of the Idea which are not true of the Thing. Consequently thô I find Necessity of Existence included in my Complex Idea of a God or Perfect Being, and can clearly perceive it's unalterable Connection with that Idea, yet it do'sn't for that Reason follow that I may affirm it of any Real Being, unless I was antecedently convinc't (which must have been by some Other Argument than This) that there actually is such a Being as is conformable to my Idea: No more than it follow's I may affirm Power or Wisdom of him antecedently to such Conviction. For These are equally included in that Idea. This Argumeet therefore can't prove the Existence of a God; but only a certain Mode of his Existence already prov'd viz, Necessity.

The Second Demonstration of *Des Cartes* is deriv'd from the Perfection of the suppos'd Innate Idea of a God. To this effect.

The Idea of an Infinitely Perfect Being, which I am conscious of in my Mind, ha's a Greater Perfection than any Finite Being was capable of causing it to represent. By consequence, 'tis Impossible I should find any such Idea in my Mind unless there be a Cause possessing as Great Perfection as is represented by that Idea. Therefore, a God or a Being of an Infinite Perfection exist's who is the Cause of that Idea which represent's such an Infinite Perfection.

This

This pretended Demonstration is weaker if possible, than the Former. And it seem's unaccountable that the *Meditations* of that Philosopher should gain such Credit in the World, which had so little besides the Novelty of the Method to recommend 'em.

What Perfection is there in the Idea ev'n of an Infinitely Perfect Being as it exist's in the Mind more than what the Mind may be suppos'd to have giv'n it? If we reflect we shal soon perceive, with the late excellent Mr. *Lock*, that we have no Positive Idea of any thing as Infinite. We can't receive nor form in our Selves any Idea so Great as wil admit of no farther Addition or Increase, Whatever Idea we perceive at any one time is plainly limited; And the most we can do to qualify any Idea to represent something of Infinity is only in a Negative way, by not fixing any Period to the repeated Additions in our Minds. And whatever Materials we employ in forming or representing such an Idea are plainly no other than what we have deriv'd from the Finite Objects we converse with, But the uniting of borrow'd Ideas of Particular Kinds and Degrees of Perfection without determining any Limits of the Progression is certainly no such Effect as should Necessarily require an Infinitely Perfect Cause. This we are conscious is sufficiently within the power of our Own Imaginations. We can form the Idea of a Mountain without limiting any Particular Height, by heaping *Pelion* upon *Ossa*, and imitating the famous Labour of the Giants, tho' we our Selves don't equal the Bulk of the *Leist* of those Mountains. And, by parity of reason, we may form a like Negative Idea of an Universal Unbounded or Infinite Perfection without having any Infinite Perfection in our Selves.

Another Argument for the Existence of God, which Some derive from the Nature of his Idea in our Minds, is to this effect.

The Existence of a God, say they, is Possible, because there's nothing contradictory in our Idea of him. But if it be Possible it follow's that it's likewise Necessary. For, supposing there is Now no God, 'tis Impossible there Ever should be any: since Eternity, which is included in our

Idea of him, can have no Beginning. His Existence must therefore either be Impossible (which yet we clearly perceive it is not) or else he must Now Necessarily exist.

This is another Plausible Argument, But we don't want it; having so many Others which have Strength as well as Plausibility.

To show it's Weakness 'twil perhaps be sufficient to produce a Parallel Instance.

If this way of arguing was good the following Argument would be no less a Demonstration. I have an Idea or Notion of a *First Man with Wings*. And I find nothing Impossible or Contradictory in this Idea. If then 'tis a Possible Idea, I conclude the Thing is Necessarily so. For if he do'sn't Now exist with Wings then (since the First Man can't be produc't after any Other) it follow's that he can Never exist with'em. And consequently a Possible Being would be Impossible.

But this being manifestly a Fallacious Argument, the Former must be so too. For they are, I think, exactly Parallel.

So uncertain is it to argue from the Notional Possibility to the Real Existence, and much more to the Necessity of that Existence. For an Object may be Possible in it's Abstract Idea when yet, on account of some External Consideration, it may be incapable of existing. That then which made the former Argument so Plausible was it's confounding an External Consideration, viz, the Want of Beginning, with the Internal Attributes of the Divine Nature. For a Relation to the Periods of Duration is somewhat merely Extrinsecal. But the Abstract Idea of a God, which was first consider'd as Possible in that Argument, included no such Relation. And therefore if the Deity could be suppos'd not to exist yet his Abstract Idea would stil be a Possibility, tho, on account of that External Consideration, he could never exist.

Spinoza give's this Argument a Different Turn in his *Opera Posthuma* p. 381. Says he, *Si tale Ens non existeret* &c. i: e: „ If such a Being (viz; an Absolutely Infinite „ one) did not exist, it could never be produc't, and so „ 'twould

„ 'twould follow that our Minds could conceive more than Nature could perform. Which he think's Absurd.

But this Argument is founded on the Supposition of our having a Positive Idea of such an Infinite. Which that it's a vain Supposition ha's been already shown both in This and the Former Book; and more will be said in the Following Part.

PART THE SECOND.

Of the Infinity of the Divine Nature.

CHAP. I.

THE Positive or Absolute Infinity of the Divine Nature is an Opinion that ha's so long and so generally prevail'd, that Some, we find, take it for a Natural Notion; and tell us we need only read over the Catalogue of our *Innate Ideas* to obtain Satisfaction about it.

But because All Men are not yet agreed whether there be any such things as Innate Ideas, and much less whether This be of the Number; and because 'tis very possible that the Effects of Education and Prejudice may have crept into the List; 'twil perhaps be convenient to make it the Subject of our *Impartial Enquiry*.

As for the English Word *Infinite*, Every one Knows 'tis a Negative Term deriv'd from the Latin *Infinitus*. Which Word (as the Learned wil inform us) was first coin'd to express the sence of the Greek *ἀπείρος*; which properly signify's Somewhat either without *End* or *Limits* in it's Self, or *Bounds* from Other Beings: Of which sences the Former is Absolute the Latter Relative.

In our Enquiry into the History of the Word *Infinite* and it's *Synonyma* 'twil be needless to make A Laborious Search into the Opinions of the Eastern Nations. Both because we have no certain nor complete Account of their Philosophy, and because their Sentiments could have no

other Influence on the Present Age than by means of the *Greeks*, by whom they were usually borrow'd and transmitted to Posterity.

Yet I can't omit the Famous Paradox ascrib'd to *Hermes Trismegistus*, who is said to have taught that *Deus est Sphæra cujus Centrum est Ubique, cujus Peripheria Nusquam*, i: e: God is a Sphere whose Centre is Every Where, but his Circumference No Where. But since the Learned aren't agree'd whether there ever was such a Person as this Egyptian *Hermes*, much less whether those Remains which are attributed to him be Genuine, we may, it's conceiv'd, be excus'd from taking any further notice of it.

Wherefore, The First (for ought with any Certainty appears) who asserted an Absolute Infinity was *Anaximander*. This Philosopher with his Followers held τὸ Ἄπειρον or *Infinity* to have been the Principle or Original of All things. Yet this *Infinity* of their's (on Enquiry) we shal find to have been no Deity, but a Confus'd Heap or *Chaos* of Inanimate Matter, from the Casual Mixture or Coalition of which they fancy'd the Universe with all it's Beauty and Regularity to have proceeded.

This Method of Philosophy was afterwards reviv'd by *Democritus* and *Epicurus*. These undertook to improve the Grosser Atheism of *Anaximander*, and to disguise the Monster in a more Specious and Philosophical Dress.

What Success those Wise Projectors met with in so Hopeful an Undertaking may easily be imagin'd, Having banisht all Contrivance and Design, and left All to the management of *Chance*, no wonder if they made but bungling work on't. Let us a little observe their Method.

And in the First place, those Builders of Worlds, having prudently *suppos'd* the Necessary Existence or Eternity of Matter, their next Care was to set it a moving. This we may conceive was but a Small Difficulty to such Mighty Undertakers. 'Twas but to *suppose* Motion to have been alike Necessary, and the Atoms (without the Toil or Fatigue of any Deity) could move as nimbly as the Stones of the *Trojan Wall* at the Melody of *Apollo's* Harp. Having thus set every Dust or Atom in Motion and begun

gun the Imaginary Dance, their next care was to provide 'em Sufficient Room. And, lest they shou'd have wanted Scope to exert their Eternal Activity, they soon agree'd, at the expense of Another *Supposition*, to accommodate 'em with no less than an *Absolutely Infinite Space*. But having once suppos'd such an Infinite or Endless Space, they soon found themselves oblig'd to *suppose* a like Infinity of their Atoms; since otherwise they could have born no proportion to the Space, and consequently could not so commodiously have been imagin'd to coalesce into Worlds. Thus these Three Principles of *Eternal Motion*, *Infinite Space*, and *Infinite Matter* being once admitted, they soon lost and bewilder'd themselves among their *Infinite Worlds*; where we shal leave 'em and proceed.

By what ha's already been observ'd it appear's that this Opinion of an Absolute Infinity was first introduc't among the Greeks by *Anaximander* and his Followers the Atheistical Atomists, and made the Attribute of *Matter*. Our next business will be to enquire When and by Whom it was first consecrated or set apart for the *Deity*.

And we need not go far to make the Discovery. For *Anaxagoras*, the next Successor but one to *Anaximander*, having, it seem's, taken a more Considerate View of the Wonderful Frame of the World, and observ'd those Signatures of Wisdom and Design which appear in the Order and Beauty of it's several Parts, was soon inclin'd to recall that Deity which his Master had banisht and to own him for the Author of so Noble a Work. For thus he begun his Philosophy with Πάντα χρήματα ὡς ἐνός &c. i: e: *All Things were at first mingl'd and blended together till the MIND newmodd'd and dispos'd 'em into an Orderly and Beautiful Frame*. To this MIND *Anaxagoras* is said to have giv'n the Title of ἄπειρος or *Infinite*. For being, stil, in Other respects, a Follower of *Anaximander*, and consequently an Assertor of an Absolute Infinity of Matter, he found himself oblig'd to attribute the Same Infinity to the MIND or Deity; since otherwise it could haye born no proportion to the Matter on which it was conceiv'd to act. And thus the Notion of such an *Infinite Deity* was deriv'd from that of *Infinite Matter*.

Tho' several Other Philosophers (especially of the *Yonic Sect*) became Patrons of this Opinion, yet we shal find that the First Considerabl Promoter of it was *Plato*. That This Philosopher was a Zealous Assertor of an Absolutely Infinite Deity, is what I conceive not likely to be deny'd. Wherefore, in stead of proving it from his Writings, let us proceed to consider his Character; it being that which may be of some use to us in forming a Judgment of his Opinions. And this we may borrow from the Judicious and Impartial Monsr. *Rapin*, who in his *Reflections on the Ancient and Modern Philosophy* near the Beginning inform's us

„ That tho' *Plato* is indeed a very Florid and Ingenious
 „ Author yet he write's with little Coherence or Method,
 „ decide's but little in his Discourses, and establishe's al-
 „ most Nothing at all. That through his too great desire
 „ to be pleasing he is too much for telling of Wonders,
 „ and thence 'tis that the most part of his Discourses are
 „ nothing else but Fables, Metaphors, and continual Al-
 „ legorys. That he often affect's to be Mysterlous in what
 „ he say's, and that it's commonly by Lying that he under-
 „ take's to perswade Truth.

To this Character we may add the General Observation, that Mystical Divinity was first introduc'd among Christians by Derivation from the *Platonick Philosophy*. On which account the Learned *Meric Casaubon* in his Treatise of *Enthusiasm* was led to make this Reflection, p. 69. „ That

„ however some of the Fathers have imagin'd the Philo-
 „ sophy of *Plato* to have been serviceable to Christia-
 „ nity, yet it ha's been the occasion of many Heresys
 „ among Christians, and that to this very day 'tis the
 „ Common Refuge of Contemplative Men who have run
 „ themselves beside their Wits.

But if we examin farther into the Matter, we shal find that tho' *Plato* was the First Considerable Promoter of this Opinion, yet the Chief advancer and Propagator of it was *Aristotle*. A Person indeed of an Admirable Genius; but too guilty of an Affected Singularity in his Opinions, and a Perpetual Humour of contradicting Others: As, I think, his Greatest Admirers must confess.

But

But to make good this Character we need no other Proof but the Matter before us. For we must observe that this his Opinion of the Divine Infinity wasn't entertain'd by him as a Dictate of his Master *Plato* (whom he seem's to take a peculiar Pleasure to contradict and expose) nor as the Result of Free and Impartial Reasoning, but was a Notion which he rather appear's to have taken up through the Same humour of Contradiction. For having asserted that Odd Opinion of the Eternity of the World in it's Present Form; not perhaps because it appear'd to him to be the most rational but because All the Philosophers who went before him had held the Contrary (as himself would persuade us in his Book *de Cælo* C. 10;) and being content to admit a Deity into his Hypothesis (probably to avoid the Fate of *Protagoras* and other reputed Atheists) he conceiv'd himself oblig'd to assert his Absolute Infinity as a Necessary Consequence of that Eternity he had attributed to the World. For since he had so compounded the matter as to derive an Eternal World by an Eternal Emanation from the Deity, and had thereby made him the Author of the Eternal Motion which he suppos'd in this Eternal World; and since he conceiv'd that nothing less than an Absolutely Infinite Power could be the Cause and Preservation of such an Infinite (or Eternal) Motion; he was consequently oblig'd to assert such an Infinite Deity as the Subject of that Infinite Power.

From hence then it appear's that this Opinion, first taught by *Anaxagoras* and afterwards spread and propagated by *Aristotle* was taken up by Both on the Credit of False Principles; if the *Absolute Infinity of Matter* and the *Eternity of the World* may deserve that Character. However, since the bare Derivation of an Opinion from a False Principle is no Necessary Argument of it's being it's Self False, we ought not from thence to take advantage against it, but to be entirely determin'd by the Evidence of Scripture and Reason.

This Opinion being thus entertain'd by *Plato* and his Celebrated Scholar *Aristotle*, who besides their Great Wits had so many Other Advantages above Most Philosophers to make 'em believ'd and follow'd; no wonder if it soon

overspread the Learned World. Yet how many soever it's Profelytes were among the more Modern Philosophers, 'tis certain it's Success among the more Primitive Christian Fathers was very different. These we find were so far from thinking it any part of their *Creed* that they rejected it as an Imposture of *Vain Philosophy*. So did *Justin Martyr*, (a) who for his Learning was styl'd the *Philosopher*, and writ immediately after the First Century. The Same did *Tatian*; (b) *Clemens Alexandrinus*, (c) and *Tertullian* (d), the Three other most Celebrated Fathers of the First and Purest Ages of Christianity.

And tho' it must be confest that the Arguments which those Pious Fathers produc't for their *Private Opinion* in opposition to this Doctrine of the Philosophers, prove nothing in a *Positive* way so much as the Strength of their Prejudice against it; yet it can't be deny'd that they conclude so far in the *Negative* as Sufficiently to demonstrate that an Absolutely Infinite Deity was no Object of the Primitive Christian Worship. And indeed their Prejudice against this Opinion must needs have been very Strong and Predominant which could oblige 'em to betake themselves to the Other Extreme against the Current both of Scripture and Reason.

But it wasn't long e're the Scene was chang'd. For now the Church begining to emerge from under the Deluge of Persecution, the Sublime and Mystical Divinity of *Plato* seem'd more suitable to the Splendor and Magnificence of the Christian Temples than the Primitive Apostolical Simplicity. And the Age of Miracles being at an end, no other Method was judg'd so likely to reconcile Christianity to the Relish of the Learned Heathens as the endeavouring an Accommodation between the Church and the Academy.

But, after the Interval of a few Centurys, the Absolute

(a) *Contra Tryph.* p. 283. & 357.

(b) *In Lib. adv. Gentes.*

(c) *In Paran.* (d) *In Lib. adv. Orig. C. 7. & contr. Marc. Lib. 2. Cap. 16.*

lute Authority of *Plato* became somewhat Limited ; and *Aristotle* was admitted to a Copartnership in the Empire. Yet tho' the Method of *Aristotle* was chiefly follow'd in the *Physical* and *Elenctical Philosophy*, the *Divine Plato* stil held his Reputation in *Theology*.

CHAP. II.

THUS have we brought down the History of the Word *Infinite* within the View of our Own times. Til which, in this respect, Matters have continu'd much the Same,

Our next Task will be to make an Impartial Enquiry into the Opinion of Infinity it's Self as 'tis now generally entertain'd among us.

And, first, we must observe that as Perfection is a General Mode of the Divine Nature, so Infinity is conceiv'd as a Mode of it's Perfection. So that *Infinity* (as usually attributed to the *Deity*) is the Same with that *Absolute Perfection*, of which we treated in the Former Book.

There's none but moderately skild in Philosophy but know's that the Word *Infinity* (as well as *Immensicy*) admit's of Two very Different Notions. For,

1. 'Tis us'd very frequently to signify Something purely *Negative* or *Relative* and so denote's a Thing's being Endless no otherwise than with reference to Other Beings. Which Negative Infinity may be understood as either *Actual* or *Potential*. In the Former Sense the Universal Space or Expansion may be said to be Immenſe or Infinite; both because by Thinking we can never arrive at any Fixt. End or Limits, and because there is no Other Space to bound it. In the Latter Sense, any given Line or Number is sometimes said to be Infinite; inasmuch as we can never imagin Either to be so far increas'd as to render it an Absolute Contradiction that stil More should be added in *Infinitem*.

2. Sometimes a Thing is said to be Infinite in a *Positive* or *Absolute* Sense; i. e., to be in it's very Nature Incapable of End. 'Tis in This Sense, that

that the Deity is usually said to be Infinite. And the Ancient *Atomists*, with some Modern *Cartesians*, have thought fit to attribute a like Infinity to Space and Matter.

Now it's a Maxim among Philosophers, that All the Attributes of an Infinite are Infinite in the Same Sense. Agreeably to which it ha's been usual to ascribe an Absolute Infinity of Kinds and Degrees of Perfection to the Deity. Which Infinity, when consider'd with reference to the Divine Essence in General, is styl'd *Absolute Immensity*; when with reference to his Power in Particular, 'tis *Absolute Omnipotence*; when with respect to his Knowledge, 'tis *Absolute Omniscience* &c.

And here we must be so just as to observe that this Opinion of an Absolute or Positive Infinity recommend's it's self by a certain Air of Piety, and seem's, at the first sight, to be very agreeable to the Idea we find our selves dispos'd to entertain of the Greatness and the Majesty of the Supreme Being. But since our Religion do'sn't consist in an Ignorant Admiration and Blind Obedience, but in a Belief upon Conviction and in a Reasonable Service; and since we can't be too wary how we receive any Opinion of the Object of our Religion without Sufficient Warrant; it can be no want of Piety nor of Modesty to make it the Subject of our Enquiry.

And therefore, our present business being chiefly with such Christians who profess to own the Scriptures as the only Sufficient Rule of Faith, let us first consider whether this Opinion may justly plead any Countenance or Authority from Them.

The Word *Infinite* in our English Translation tho' as apply'd to Other Things it may be met with several times, viz, in Job 22. 5. Nah. 2. 49. and 3. 9; yet as it refer's to God it occur's but in One place, viz, Psal. 147. 5. where his *Understanding* is said to be *Infinite*.

But if we consult the Original Hebrew, we shal observe that the Word which is here Translated *Infinite* properly signify's *Without Number*. And therefore, in the Judgment of any Unprejudic'd Man, it can't here be conceiv'd to denote the Absolute Infinity of the Divine Understanding (which

(which None wil assert to be Infinite *in Number*;) but must necessarily be expounded (as by the Best Expositors 'tis wont to be *) with reference to it's *Objects*, or it's *Effects*: Which are hereby asserted to be so Numerous as either to Surpass or not easily to come within the compass of Humane Reckoning. For thus we read of *Camels without Number*, Judges 6. 15. *People without Number*, 2 Chron. 12. 3. *Caterpillars without Number*. Psal. 105. 12. *Virgins without Number*, Cantic. 6. 8. &c. By which Expressions (I'm perswaded) none ever understood an Absolute Infinity.

But tho' the Scriptures don't *expressly* teach it us, yet Are there not Some Texts which at least Infer or Imply it? What else can be meant by 1 Kings 8. 27. where we read that *the Heavens, yea the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain the Essence of their Creator*; and Psal. 139. 7. &c. *Whither shal I flee from thy Presence*, &c? But I think it must be confest that, if we lay aside Prejudice, we shal easily perceive that Neither of these can amount to a Sufficient Proof. For tho' the *Heaven of Heavens* (or the Highest or Utmost Heaven, as the Hebraism import's) cannot contain the Essence of the Deity, do's it therefore follow that it's *Absolutely* Infinite? Certainly no more than if it had been said the Earth or Air cannot contain him. For since the Heavens are by those very Words asserted to be Finite (which, by the way, is no weak Argument to prove the Finiteness of the Material Universe,) 'tis evident that they can bear no greater Proportion to an Absolutely Infinite Being than the Earth or Air or ev'n the Minutest Particle of Dust. And therefore to infer the Absolute Infinity of the Divine Essence from a Comparison with the Heavens (tho' the Greatest and most Capacious of Created Beings) would be no less Impertinent than to make the Same Conclusion from a Comparison with the most Diminutive Thing in Nature, since the Greatest and the Least

of

* *Sapientia ejus non est Numerus: i: e: Rerum quarum Intelligentiam habet. Sic. Mutis. Vel eorum qua sapienter fecit. Ut Gejer: Camp: Moller: &c.*

of Finite Beings must bear an Equal Disproportion to such an Infinite. And as for the Latter Text; it can't necessarily import any more than the Former. For it prove's nothing but the Divine *Omnipresence*, which may very well be admitted without the Supposition of a Positive or Absolute Infinity. As may be fully shown hereafter.

It seem's then we aren't likely to discover any Solid Foundation for this Opinion in Scripture. Let us therefore proceed to consider it's Strength in point of Reason.

I. ARG. I. Now the Great Argument which of late has been us'd as little less than a Demonstration of the Absolute Infinity as well as of the Existence of a Deity is deriv'd from that *Innate Idea* of an Infinite Being which is said to be in Every man. This (as we before observ'd) is the Argument of Monfr. *Des Cartes*. For that Ingenious Author, having so far proceeded in his Doubts in the Beginning of his *Meditations* as to question the Reality of his Senses and All the Ideas deriv'd from External Objects, and having thereby excluded All such Proofs of the Existence of a God whose Credit depended on the Veracity of Their Testimony, found himself oblig'd to search out Some Other Proof from what he could discover within his Own Mind, by the help of which he might demonstrate a Deity, and thereby lay a Foundation for Certainty in Other Matters.

Wherefore, in pursuance of his Design, having laid it down for a Principle that (tho' All the Informations of his External Senses might, possibly, prove False and Delusive, yet) Whatever he Clearly and Distinctly perceiv'd in his Own Mind, without Derivation from the Objects of Sense, must of necessity be True; and then, discovering, as he thought, such a Clear and Distinct Idea of an Infinite Being impress'd on his Mind as contain'd Greater Perfection than it could derive either from the Immediate Instrumentality of his Senses, or from the Power of his Imagination; he thence proceeded to conclude that such an Infinite Being existed, since Nothing less than Such an Infinite Being could be a Sufficient Cause of That Idea.

This Argument suppose's Two Things.

1. It

1. It suppose's that we have Such an Idea of a Being Infinite in All Perfections as could not be deriv'd from the Power of our Own Imaginations working on the Ideas transmitted from Sensible Objects; and therefore,

2. That it was Innate or born with us.

As for the Former Supposition; it ha's already been observ'd that Whatever Idea we may be said to have of an Infinite, it can in Reality be no other than a Negative one; and consequently no sufficient Reason can be assign'd why the Perfection of that Idea should be suppos'd to exceed the Causality of our Own Imaginations.

And as for the Latter Supposition, viz, That the Idea we are said to have of such an Infinite Being is Innate; 'twas consider'd in the Beginning of This and the Former Book, and has been refuted at large by the late Judicious Mr. *Lock*.

II. ARG. 2. Another Argument made use of as a Proof of the Positive or Absolute Infinity of the Divine Being is deriv'd from the Attribute of *Absolute Independence*; to this effect. If the Deity be not thus Infinite it must be either because he was Limited by Himself or by Another. That he was not limited by Himself is evident. For no Wise Being can be suppos'd willing to abridge Himself; but the Contrary. And that he was not limited by Another is no less evident. For no Other Being was capable of so doing.

This Argument, as commonly understood, suppose's Two Things.

1. It suppose's that whatever Being is Finite must have been made so by a Proper Causality. Thus the Learned Dr. *Scot* (according to the Sense of the Platonists) explain's it's meaning. * „God's Independence, say's he, or „his not being from Another, necessarily infer's his Im- „mensity (viz, in the Absolute Sense.) For that which „Limits or make's Beings Finite is only the Will or Power „of their Causes,

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But

* Christian Life Part. 2. p. 193.

But certainly, if we judge impartially, That can't be reputed the Proper Elective Cause of Finiteness, ev'n in Created Beings, which could not have been the Cause of Infinity. For no Cause can Properly be said to a-bridge is Effect of That which it could not have be-
 stow'd. But if no Being can bestow an Absolute Infi-
 nity on it's Effect, and if what can't bestow it can't with
 any Propriety be said to refuse or withhold it, or to
 choose to produce the Contrary by a Positive Causality;
 it seem's that the Reason why an Effect is Finite could not
 be the Wil or Power of it's Cause, but an Absolute Ne-
 cessity in the very Nature of Things,

2. This Argument suppose's that the Deity's being such
 as he is, proceeded from his Own Pleasure or Choice.
 Thus the Learned *Le Clerc* unriddl's it's Meaning. * Say's
 he, *Quando cogitamus Deum ab omni Aeternitate extitisse,*
nec quidquam eorum quæ habet ab alio accepisse, sed per se &
Naturâ suâ semper habuisse, eo facili devenimus ut ejus Proprie-
tates esse Infinitas agnoscamus. Etenim qui tantæ Præstantiæ
est ut Duratione Infinitâ est præditus atque nihil ab ullo Ente
acceperit, nullos etiam Proprietatum Terminos habere potest.
Proprietates Finitas eæ Naturæ habent quæ eas ab aliâ ipsis Fi-
nes statuente acceperunt; non quæ sibi ipsa, si ita loqui licet,
pro Arbitrio quæ voluit dedit. i: e: „ When we consider
 „ that God existed from all Eternity and Naturally and
 „ Independently enjoy'd whatever he possess'd, without
 „ being Debtor to any Other, thence we are easily induc't
 „ to acknowledge his Perfection to be Infinite. For so
 „ Excellent a Nature as was of Infinite Duration, and
 „ was no way indebted to any Other, can consequently
 „ have no Bounds of it's Properties. For Such Natures
 „ only have Finite Propertys who receiv'd 'em from some
 „ Limiting Cause; not such an one as (if I may so speak)
 „ confer'd on It's Self whatever Perfections it pleas'd.

This, we see, is confessedly the Sense and Import of
 the Present Argument, By which it appear's that none
 can

can become it's Profelyte til he be brought to speak seriously in the Style of *Plato* (a) and *Des Cartes*, (b) and to assert that the Deity produc't Himself by a Proper Positive Causality. Which Assertion can, it's conceiv'd, need no Confutation; but, on the contrary, must be allow'd to be a Sufficient Confutation of any Principle from which it Clearly and Naturally derive's, Yet in This *Plato* is imitated by *Lactantius* when he say's *Deus seipsum fecit*, The Deity produc't Himself, and that therefore he is *Talis qualem seipsum esse voluit*, Such as he will'd himself to be. And *Plotinus*, one of *Plato*'s Disciples; call's the Deity *αὐτοῦ αὐτῷ*, his own Cause. And he tell's us that since an Absolute Simplicity is reckon'd among the Attributes of the First Being (which, says he, require's that his Will and his Essence be One and the Same) consequently his Essence must be from Himself, forasmuch as his Will is so. But of Absolute Simplicity we shal discourse hereafter among the Consequences of an Absolute Infinity.

Some, I know, have endeavour'd to soften those harsh Expressions, and have told us that by the Deity's being the Cause of Himself no more is meant than that he contain's in Himself a Necessary Reason of his own Existence. But tho' such Language may be capable of a less offensive Sense in the Mouths of Others, yet 'tis clear that the Proposers of this Argument (if they intend to prove any thing) are reduc't to the Necessity of using it in the most Absurd and Indefensible Sense. For a Being's not abridging or limiting it's Self is Somewhat purely Negative, and therefore can't, alone, infer Such an Infinity; which, tho' conceiv'd in a Negative manner and exprest by a Negative Word, is asserted to be most highly Positive in it's Self, and not only not to exclude but actually to Include an Endless Progression of Kinds and Degrees of Perfection.

III. ARG. 3. Again, 'tis usual with the Assertors of a Positive or Absolute Infinity to borrow a Proof from the

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Nature

a *De Repub. Lib. 18.*

b *Medit. p. 57, 58.*

Nature of Creation. Since nothing less, say they, than an Absolutely Infinite Power was sufficient to pass over the Infinite Distance between Not-being and Being in the Production of a Thing from Nothing, it follow's that there never could have been a Creation, had there not been some Absolutely Infinite Being who was the Subject of such Power.

E're we consider this Argument it may not be Imperinent to observe what pains have been taken by the Introducers of this Opinion of an Absolutely Infinite Power (if I may so say) to Christianize it and suit it to the Analogy of Faith. For whereas *Aristotle* made it an Inference from his Opinion of the World's *Eternity* by way of Emanation, These Gentlemen, by a strange Logical Dexterity, bestow'd on it a Relation to a very different Principle, and infer'd it as a Consequence from it's *Creation*.

But, perhaps, 'tis no difficult Matter to manifest the Weakness and Insufficiency of this Argument. For if to pass over a Distance be to prove it Finite (as it most certainly is;) it follow's that the Distance between Not being and Being was not Infinite; since it ha's been actually past over in the Work of Creation.

Whatever Some may imagin, it seem's to me that the Distance between Not-being and Being is no other than such as is between Not-thinking and Thinking, Not-moving and Moving: For These are Terms equally Contradictory. Between which and the like Terms if we suppose Something Analogous to an Infinite Distance, it can, 'tis humbly conceiv'd, be for no other Reason but because Contradictory Terms can never be brought together or reconcil'd. But tho' these Terms can never be brought together so as to render One and the Same Subject both Thinking and Not-thinking, Moving and Not-moving at once and in the Same Sence; yet the Passing from One of these Terms to the Other (so as is Actually done when a Thing which was in any respect Unthinking or Without Motion begin's to Think or Move) is, I suppose, no Passing of an Infinite Distance; since 'tis what we see done every day ev'n by Finite Agents. If in the Creation the
Divine

Divine Power had so past the Distance between Not-being and Being as to have brought together or reconcil'd these Two Contradictory Terms, by causing the World both to Be and not to Be, to be at Once both Something and Nothing, this would, it's confest, have yielded somewhat like a Proof. But that the Supposition of a Creation oblige's no man to believe such Absurditys as These ha's already been observ'd in the Former Book.

Besides, The Degrees of Distance between Not-being and Being, Nothing and Something, can't be more in Number than the Degrees of Entity or Perfection in the Minute'st Created Being. But certainly These can't be asserted to be Absolutely Infinite, unless we wil attribute an Absolute Infinity of Perfection to the Least and Meanest of Creatures.

Notwithstanding what ha's been said, I think none will deny that the Act of Creation furnishe's a Sufficient Demonstration of the Divine *Omnipotence*; since Nothing on this side a Contradiction can be imagin'd less possible than a Production from Nothing. For that a Power may be properly Omnipotent or Allmighty without being Absolutely Infinite wil appear by what shal be said under the Ninth Argument.

IV. ARG. 4. Another Argument may be form'd by comparing the Doctrine of an Absolute Infinity with the Vulgar Notion of *Eternity*. For, may it be said, Since we easily edmit Eternity as a genuin Attribute of the Deity tho' it's confest it surpasses our Imaginations to conceive an *Absolutely Infinite Duration*; Why should any man be backward to believe an *Absolute Immensity* for no other Reason than because he can't comprehend an *Absolutely Infinite Substance*? And this is, perhaps, the Argument which ha's seem'd of greatest Weight to Most Considering Men.

But to this, it's humbly conceiv'd, may be reply'd.

1. That the Reason why any Intelligent Man either doubt's of or disbeliev's an Absolute Immensity is not purely because he can't comprehend it. For such a Person can't but be sensible that Many Things may (for want of

Sufficient Ideas) be Inconceivable to Us which are not so in Themselves. But it must chiefly be because of the Absurditys and Inconveniencys which he conceiv's to attend that Opinion.

2. That supposing the Comparison between any Two Opinions to be Just with reference to some Similitude or Analogy that we may conceive; yet if they don't appear to be equally founded on Reason, the bare Similitude between their Notions can't be sufficient to oblige us to entertain 'em with the same Degree of Assent. But that there's no little difference between these two Opinions in This respect is too evident to be deny'd. To disbelieve the Existence of an Eternal Being is to suppose the Grosslest of Contradictions; viz, the Production of the First Cause. For which Reason (as we elsewhere observ'd) there never was a Philosopher in his Right Wits but he asserted Somewhat that was Eternal. *Anaximander*, tho' he deny'd the Existence of a God yet, attributed an Eternity to Matter and Motion. And if he likewise asserted an Immensity in the Absolute Sense of the Word, 'twas not merely for it's Own sake, but chiefly perhaps by reason of it's Connection with that Eternity of Motion which he found himself oblig'd to suppose. But we have already mention'd Divers, and might have added More who have rejected the Opinion of the Divine Absolute Immensity. A Sufficient Intimation that the Attributes of *Eternity* and *Absolute Immensity* are very different either in point of Reason or, at least, of Evidence.

I confess, *Des Cartes* and a certain Learned Writer of our Own * have been pleas'd to affirm that to assert an End of *Space* is to assert a Contradiction. Their Meaning is, That if the Universal Space be Finite it must be bounded by Somewhat which likewise is Space. And indeed if this were a Necessary Consequence the Contradiction would be too evident to be deny'd. But 'tis humbly conceiv'd the *Ends* of Things are Absolute or Inde-

* *Dr. Clarke* in his Reply to the 6 Letter p. 38.

Independent on their being bounded or encompassed by any thing Without 'em: Being in reality nothing distinct from the Things Themselves. For What is it to have Ends but to have Extremitys? If it was not so, then the Immediate Reason of a Thing's being Finite would be no other than the Neighbourhood of the Surrounding Beings. But Who wil assert the Air or the Divine Substance it's Self (consider'd as abstracted from the Divine Power) to be the Immediate Reason that the Globe of the Earth is of a Finite Extension?

But Some wil say, What Idea can we have of a Thing beyond which there's no Space or Extension? I reply; Tho' it should be granted that We can form no Idea of it, Wil it purely from Thence follow that 'tis in it's Self Impossible? Wil the Assertors of an Absolute Infinity affirm Our Ideas to be the Necessary Standards of the Truth and Reality of Things? Wil *They* allow nothing to be Possible hut what's Conceivable by *Us*? 'Tis true we can form no Idea of an End of Space or Extension. But do's it follow that Things must needs be in Nature as they seem to be in Our Imaginations? 'Tis clear there can be no Absolute Contradiction or Inconsistence in supposing an End of Any Extension whatever; since 'tis what our Experience assure's us is Real with respect to those Particular Extensions which come within Our Notice and Observation. And if we can't notwithstanding attain an Idea of the Universal Space or Extension, yet since This is as well Space or Extension as any Other, it can certainly be no Repugnance in the Nature of the Thing that it should be Finite too; and by consequence, an End of Space may be conceivable to some Other Being tho' not to Us. For that it is not the Nature of the Idea it's Self, but the Manner of Our conceiving it, which obliges us to consider Space or Extension as Without End, may further appear from hence. When we attempt to form the Largest imaginable Idea of Space, we consider it's Idea in such manner as it's transmitted to us by our *Sight*. This represent's it to us as a Vast *Congeries* of Innumerable Beings severally bounded by Others. So that, according

to This manner of conceiving, Space and a Boundedness by Surrounding Beings seem to be Necessarily Connected or Inseparable : For how far soever we extend the Prospect in our Imaginations stil the Same Scene is represented to our View without End. But let us now suppose that we had no other Idea of Space or Extension but what we receiv'd by our Sense of *Feeling*, in a State of Rest. 'Tis manifest that, in This Case, our Ideas of Feeling and Space would be always United and Commensurate; and by consequence, we should be so far from being under a Necessity of conceiving Space as Absolutely Infinite or Endless, that we should perhaps find it Difficult to conceive it to exceed the Limits of our Own Bodys.

'Tis known to be the Method of the *Cartesians* Sometimes to run counter in their Reasonings, and to argue, not that the Idea is True because it agree's with the Thing but, on the contrary, that the Thing must therefore be So or So because the Idea in our Minds is So. Hence it proceed's that having discover'd the Negative Immensity of Our Idea of Space, they make no Difficulty to conclude that the Thing is Absolutely and Positively Infinite or Immenſe. But this sort of Reasoning become's none who allow's that Things may be otherwise in Nature than they sometimes appear to be in Our Phantasys; and that it's the Office of our Reason to examin the Truth of our Ideas by comparing 'em with the Things they represent. For tho' it's confest we find our selves under an Inability of conceiving the Universal Space with End or Limits; Yet this is not an Argument of the Impossibility of an End of Space sufficient to be oppos'd to the Demonstrations which may, and hereafter shal, be produc't from Reason to evince the Contrary. No more than a Blind Man's Inability to form an Idea of Light and Colours is fit to be admitted as a Proof that our Eyes perpetually deceive us. This Inability ought rather to be resolv'd into the Influence Our State and Circumstances have on our Minds. For, being our Selves every way surrounded by Extended Objects, and finding (as we just now observ'd) that All these Objects are severally

ly surrounded by Others; we are apt to forget, or perhaps not well to apprehend that the Limits of Things are properly nothing else but their Own Extremitys; to argue, with *Spinoza*, that Whatever is Finite is bounded by some Other Thing; and, consequently, to conclude that the Universal Space or Extension, since there's nothing beyond it whereby it can be bounded, is absolutely Infinite or Without Limits.

It seem's then most reasonable to conclude that tho' the Simple Positive Ideas which we perceive in our Minds proceed Immediately from Something Real Without us; (since the Mind can't form any *Materially* New Idea;) yet Compound and Negative Ideas yield no such Infalible Proofs of the Existence of any External Objects from whence they Immediately proceed. For we experience in our Selves a Power both of Uniting the Ideas of Things that never were united In Nature, and of Forming Negations Arbitrarily and at Pleasure; or if not form'd by our Own Wil and Pleasure, they may be Unavoidably deriv'd from the nature of our State and Circumstances. Thus, because we have an Idea of *Space* or *Extension*, we may be assur'd there's Something in Nature from which it Immediately derive's; for This is a Simple Positive Idea. And that there's Something External which Immediately cause's in us the Idea of *End* or *Limits* we are sure for the Same Reason; since ev'n our Idea of the *End* of any thing is Positive. But that there's any Real External Cause of our Idea of the *Endlessness* of Space or Extension we can't be assur'd merely from the Idea we have of it in our Imaginations; since That Idea is purely Negative and therefore represent's no Being as Positively or Absolutely Infinite*, and may, by consequence, have been deriv'd, if not from our Own Wil yet, from our Particular and Unavoidable Circumstances; as we before observ'd. But to proceed.

3. If we should add That the Attributes of Eternity and Absolute Immensity have as little Agreement in their Natures as either in Reason or Evidence we should not, perhaps, want sufficient Proof. For, tho' it should be admitted

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* Vid. Mr. *Lock* of *Humane Understanding* Part. 1. Chap. 17, Sect. 13.

ted that the Nature of Eternity is wel represented by the Idea of *Duration*, yet it's evident that Eternity can't be affirm'd to be Now an Absolutely Infinite Duration. For let us fix on any Imaginable Point of it yet (whatever *Boëtius* in his Vulgar Definition may pretend to the contrary) there would be an Inexhaustible Duration stil to come. Which alone must make the case of Eternity quite different from that of an Absolute Immensity; which necessarily exclude's the very Possibility of the least Addition and Increase. But 'tis humbly conceiv'd that neither the Idea of *Duration* is agreeable to the Nature of Eternity, nor is Eternity a Proper Subject of the Denomination of *Infinite*. As may be manifested in a more Convenient Place, *

V. ARG. 5. Another Proof of the Attribute of Absolute Infinity is usually attempted from the suppos'd *Immensity of Extension*, or (which with Many of our Modern Philosophers is the very Same) of *Matter*. To this effect Mr. *Le Clerc* expresse's himself: Say's he, *Immensitas Dei inde colligitur quod Materia videatur Immensa. Absurdum enim esset Deum, qui multò plures Proprietates habet quàm Materia, qui eam pigram & immotam agit prout vult, eà ità superari, ut Partes Materiae ultra Potentiæ Divinæ Limites porrigerentur, quod tamen, nisi Deus esset Immensus, seu posset per se agere per Immensam Materiae Extensionem, statueretur. &c. i. e.*
 „ The Immensity [or Infinity] of God is infer'd from the
 „ seeming Immensity of Matter. For it would be Absurd
 „ to imagin that the Deity, who possesse's more Property's
 „ than Matter, who move's and actuates the Stupid Heap
 „ as he please's, should be so far excel'd by it that the
 „ Parts of Matter should be extended beyond the Limits
 „ of his Power. Which yet we must either assert, or else
 „ must confess that he is Immense or Capable of acting
 „ in All parts of the Infinite Material Extension. &c.

This Argument is grounded on that Inability (before spoken of) which we experience when we set our selves to limit our Idea of the Universal Extension in our Minds] For 'tis from this Relative Infinity of the Idea that Some

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* See Part the 3. of *Eternity*.

are apt, without any farther Examination, to infer the Absolute Infinity of the Thing.

But since by the Confession of All men nothing is more apt to deceive us than Imagination, and since 'tis not unlikely that This is one of it's Cheats and Impostures (as we observ'd under the Former Argument;) 'tis a thing unworthy a Philosopher to suffer himself to be wholly determin'd by That without consulting his Reason, whose Office it is to curb and correct it.

Yet Some (I mean *Des Cartes* and his Followers) confounding the Ideas of *Extension* and *Body* have by this Error of Imagination been led to assert the Absolute Infinity ev'n of the Material Universe; tho' they could not but at the same time be sensible that their Hypothesis in some sense render'd Matter or Body a Necessary Being, by depriving the Deity both of the Power of creating a Finite Whole at the first, and of afterwards annihilating any Part. I call this an Error of Imagination; for that Reason do'sn't concur with Imagination in the Present Case is, I think, most certain. For

I. 1. Reason will assure us that since Any assignable Portion of Quantity hath certain Particular Dimensions, by consequence an Absolutely Infinite or Immense Quantity or Extension (If Really existent) must Actually contain Infinite Distinguishable Dimensions, or such a Number as, by reason of it's Vastness, absolutely exclude's the very Possibility of the least Addition and Increase. But 'tis humbly conceiv'd that such an Absolutely Infinite Number is a pure Impossibility. For after Millions of Ages spent in adding Millions of Millions together 'tis evident that the Number will be no less Finite than it was at the First, and so there will stil be the Same Possibility of adding on and increasing for Ever. If any man will deny this, he ought to assign a Reason why after having arriv'd at any Particular Number it should become a Contradiction for it to increase rather than before.

Thus the very Method whereby our Minds attain their Negative Idea of Infinity (which is by repeated Addition of Numbers without End) serve's as a Demonstration of the

the Absolute Impossibility of a Positive or Absolute Infinity in Nature. For if an Absolute Infinity of Number is therefore Impossible because it's the very Nature of Infinity not to be Replete; 'tis manifest that an Absolutely Infinite Extension or Space must be alike Impossible for the Same Reason.

This way of Arguing Mr *Lock* think's sufficient to evince the Absolute Impossibility of a Positive *Idea* of Infinity in our Minds. And it's hard to imagin why it should not equally prove the Impossibility of the *Thing* in Nature. For Different Dimensions are as distinguishable in Nature as in Our Imaginations. An Absolute Infinity of Number if (as he grant's) it be Contradictory in it's Self and therefore Impossible in Idea, can't but be equally Impossible in Nature. Not that Our Ideas are the Adequate Measures of Reality; but because what is Inconsistent in it's Self can't but be Impossible both in Idea and Reality.

But here the *Spinosists* will tell us that Distinction and Number of Parts and Dimensions are mere Nonentities or Chimera's, and therefore not to be consider'd in the Present Argument. For, say they, whatever Division or Distinction of Substance we are apt to believe, is no other than a Misreport of our Senses, which are easily deceiv'd by Appearances and can't penetrate into the True Nature of Substance, which thô represented to 'em under Innumerable Modifications is yet, in reality, but One and Indivisible. *

I reply. Thô, according to the Systeme of *Spinoza*, who define's Substance in Terms which import an Absolute Selfsubsistence or Independence, it would follow that it is but One Being: Yet it could not follow from thence that there's no Distinction in that Being. But besides the Original Independent Being, there's Another Sort of Beings which (as we prov'd in the Former Book) deriv'd their Existence from Him, and which, as being the Real Ultimate Subjects of Peculiar Attributes, may (as was observ'd) very properly come under the Notion of Substance

* *Spinoza* in Ep. 21.

stance too; there's therefore no reason why we should doubt of the Reality of That Distinction and Variety of Substance at least which we perceive among these Inferiour Created Beings. For 'tis plain there's nothing in Their Natures inconsistent with the Notion ev'n of a Real Division. And consequently, we may and must consider Number and Distinction of Parts and Dimensions as a Real Affection or Attribute of Such Beings. But, in the Present Argument, we need not suppose any Real Divisibility. 'Tis enough for our Purpose to have only suppos'd Extension to be Mentally Divisible, i. e., Distinguishable. For Distinction in Nature yields as Real a Foundation of Number as a Proper Division.

Others, on the contrary, will perhaps object that Matter as Such is Infinitely Divisible, and that an Infinite Divisibility can imply no less than an Actual Infinity of Parts and Dimensions. That by consequence 'tis unreasonable to deny the Possibility of an Absolutely Infinite Extension on account of the suppos'd Absurdity of it's containing an Actually Infinite Number of Parts: when at the same time we are oblig'd to own such an Actual Infinity of Parts in the Least imaginable Portion of it. But this Objection will perhaps be found to have no Weight by the Reply to the following Argument.

II. 2. Reason will assure us that as an Absolute Nothing can bear no Proportion to any Real Quantity, so on the contrary, All Real Quantity, how Minute soever, must of necessity bear some Proportion to All other Quantity. For this Proportionateness, being founded in the very Nature of Quantity consider'd Absolutely or in it's Self, can't possibly be taken away by any merely Relative Consideration of Excess or Defect. Wherefore, since we are Witnesses of the Actual Existence of a great Variety of Quantitative Parts, 'twould follow that, if the Whole was Absolutely Infinite, these Finite Parts would severally bear a Proportion to an Absolutely Infinite Whole. But if so, then such an Infinite Quantity, by the Substraction of a Single Particle, would become Finite. Consequently the Difference between Finite and Infinite would consist but in a Single Quantitative Part, and Absolute Infinity

finity would be the Attribute of a certain Determin'd Quantity : Than which Nothing can be more Absurd. For Absolute Infinity can't but exclude All Determination.

Some, I know, have told us that Finite Quantities how Great or Small, how Many or Few soever aren't to be consider'd as *Aliquot* or Constituent Parts of an Infinite, but as Mere Mathematical Points which bear no Proportion at all. *

But this is contrary to that Proportionateness which we have observ'd to be founded in the very Nature of Quantity. And since Mathematical Points are Mere Nothings or Creatures of Imagination, 'tis in effect to say we must repute the several Parts of Extension, when consider'd with respect to the Whole, as Mere Nothings, divested at once of Extension and Existence. Wherefore this Evasion is so far from helping the Difficulty that (in the Judgment of any Unprejudic'd man) it strongly confute's the Supposition of an Absolutely Infinite Extension. For hence it appears that Such an Infinity can't be defended any otherwise than by divesting Quantity of it's very Nature, or by denying it to be Proportionate; which is all one as to deny it to have Dimensions. I say, in General, 'tis to divest Quantity of it's very Nature. For, for the Same reason that we deny Any conceivable Part of Quantity to be Proportionate we shal be equally oblig'd to deny All Others to be so. Yet such Absurditys we shal be reduc't to if we wil not allow the Opinion of an Absolutely Infinite Extension to be it's self an Absurdity. For the Difficultys appear to be Equal whether we suppose Finites to bear a Proportion to the imagin'd Infinite Whole, or not to bear any Proportion at all. There seem's then to be an Absolute Inconsistence between Quantity (which can't but have Dimensions) and Such Immensity (which exclude's all Dimensions.)

The Evidence of These or the like Reflections had such Influence on *Aristotle* that having, at the End of his Physics, concluded that the Deity was not of Finite Magnitude (as thinking it to be Inconsistent with his Notion of an

* Dr. Clark's Disc. of the Being and Attrib. of God, p. 37.

an Eternal Mover) he add's that he neither could be of an Absolutely Infinite Magnitude, because such an Infinite Magnitude was (in his Opinion) Absurd and Impossible. And therefore, upon the Whole, he conclude's him to be of no Magnitude at all.

Some wil here object the Demonstrations of Abstract Geometrie! as Proofs of an Absolutely Infinite Space or Extension. For instance 'tis plain, say they, from the Elements of *Euclid* that to any given Point of a Circle's Circumference a Tangent may be drawn of which only one Point fall's on the Circle and the rest fall's Without it.

But to this it may be reply'd, that Abstract Geometrie consider's Things only as they are in Idea. Wherefore the utmost that this and the like Demonstrations can prove is no more than This, viz, That no Space or Extension can by 'Us be imagin'd so Great but that stil Greater may be conceiv'd. But since Things may appear otherwise in Idea than they are in Themselves, it do'sn't Necessarily follow that what is true of the Abstract Idea in our Minds is true of the Thing as it exist's in Nature. And tho this and the like Demonstrations must be confest to hold with reference to any Particular Portions of Real Space or Extension as wel as with respect to the General Idea of it in our Minds, yet it do'sn't follow that they must be True with reference to the Universal Extension Without which Nothing exists.

It can here, I conceive, be to no purpose to object that if the Universal Extension be limited by Nothing it must be Absolutely Without Limits or Infinite. For the Immediate Limits of Things are (as we observ'd) nothing else but their Own Extremitys. Which render's the Idea of Limits no less Positive in the Universe beyond which nothing exist's than in a Being surrounded by the Indositly or Infinitely extended Vortices of *De. Cartes's* Imaginary World. So far is the Notion *Spinosa* give's us of Finiteness in his Second Definition from being true, by which he allow's That only to be Finite which is limited by Another Being of the Same Kind. Consequently, the
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Inference he draw's from thence, viz, That therefore the Universal Substance is Absolutely Immense or Infinite (because it's Impossible there should be a Substance of the Same Kind or Nature and yet Distinct from it by which it might be limited) is of no Weight.

But perhaps Some wil stil object, That Admitting such a *Pure Nothing*, yet since Bodys may exist where there's Nothing to exclude 'em, it follow's that ev'n That Nothing must stil imply a Capacity of receiving Bodys, and consequently must come under the Notion of *Space*. But to this it's conceiv'd may be reply'd, That a *Pure Nothing* can have no Real Attributes. Whereas, a Capacity to receive Bodys, being an Attribute which imply's *Space*, can't but be a Great Reality. For whatever Arbitrary Distinction Some have made between Extension and *Space*, they import Notions equally Real and Absolute. As wil be shown in the Appendix.

Befote we dismiss this Subject I can't but take notice of an Argument that may be form'd from the Principles of *Sr. Ifaak Newton* to prove the Absolute Infinity of the Material Universe. The Greater Bodys of Our System are by him demonstrated to incline towards each other by a Mutual Gravitation. And we have reason to believe the Same of the Remoter Bodys of the Universe. Now, if these Bodys are Finite in Number and Entent, the terminating Bodys can have no Gravitation towards any thing beyond Themselves; and consequently, having no Contrary Tendency to ballance their Gravitation towards the Interiour Bodys, they must be continually approaching nearer to the Common Centre of the Universe. But This, in time, must occasion no small Confusion in the World, and must very much reflect on the Wisdom of it's Great Author for having establish't Laws so directly tending to the Destruction of his Work.

But to This I suppose we may reply, That if, with the *Epicureans*, we conceiv'd Gravity to be a Necessary Independent Property of Matter, and Uniform or Alike in All Bodys; or if with the *Cartesians*, we thought our selves oblig'd to account for Every thing by Uniform Mechanical

nical Principles; we should then be inclin'd to grant the Consequence, and assert the Absolute Infinity of the Universe. But since in the Former Book we have from Sr. *Isaac Newton's* own Principles demonstrated that Gravitation is no other than an Immediate Continu'd Impression of the Deity who, being a Free Agent, was capable of suiting it's Degrees and Conditions to the various States of the several Parts of his Creation; we can have no Necessity (according to the Same Principles) to Suppose the Great Bodys in the Extremitys of the Universal System to be subject to the same Degrees and Laws of Gravitation with those in the Interior Spaces. Which being duly consider'd the Difficulty vanishes.

VI. ARG. 6. As Some are us'd to argue for the Attribute of Absolute Immensity from the suppos'd Infinite Bulk of the World, so Others have waded the Same Inference from a very Different Principle, viz, *Infinite Smallness*. Say's Monsr. *Abbadie* in the First Part of *his Discourse of the Christian Religion*, p. 101. „Thó we could „ not prove *Magnitude* to be Infinite yet the Demonstrations of Geometrie wil oblige us to own an Infinity in *Smallness*. This he speak's with reference to the Infinite Divisibility of Matter, and the Actual infinity of Parts from which it may be suppos'd to result.

To this 'tis humbly conceiv'd the following Reflections may yield a Sufficient Reply.

That Matter is Infinitely Divisible need's no Proof from the Demonstrations of Geometrie, being abundantly Clear from this One Consideration. Nothing is more plain than that mere Division can never effect the Annihilation of it's Subject.* But if not, then there wil always remain something which is capable of farther Division. For since the Minuteſt imaginable Parts of Matter have Upper and Under and Sides it can never be prov'd a Contradiction that what is Above should be divided from that which is Under, or that any one of the Sides should be separated from it's Opposite. But if it be no Contradiction, then it can't be affirm'd to be Impossible to That Being to

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whom Every thing but a Contradiction is Possible.

But, What can we conclude from This to the Present Purpose? Shal we say that because Matter is Infinitely Divisible therefore it Actually contain's an Absolutely Infinite Number of Parts? Bnt this is a Strange Method of Arguing, how Specious soever it may seem. For thô any Particular Portion of Matter should be Eternally divided by the Divine Power yet the Number of Separate Parts resulting from that Division must Ever remain Finite. And the Reason of it's Infinite or Eternal Divisibility is not because Every particular Portion of Matter contains an Absolutely Infinite Number of Coexistent Parts; but, on the contrary, because it's Impossible that such an Absolutely Infinite Number should exist. For could it at any time (ev'n by the Action of Omnipotence) exist, then there could be no further Divisibility; unless we can suppose a Number Greater then Absolutely Infinite. This Infinite or Eternal Divisibility of Matter is therefore so far from being a Proof of the Actual Existence of Infinite Parts that it sufficiently confute's it.

Besides, thô it would be Difficult as wel as Needless to reply to all the Subtiltys which might be objected, 'tis, I think, most certain that there can be no Absolute Infinity of Parts in a Subject that is not of an Infinite Bulk. For, if so, then the Addition of the least Particle (since all Quantity is Essentially Proportionate) would render it more than Absolutely Infinite. Which is Absurd.

Again, if both the Whole Material Universe and Every Particular Portion of it consisted severally of an Actual Infinity of Coexistent Parts, 'twould follow that there's an Absolute Infinity of Absolutely Infinite Numbers of Coexistent Parts in the World, each of which include's as many Real Coexistent Parts as the Whole which they compose. For Absolute Infinity admit's not of More or Less. Which is equally Absurd.

As for the Demonstrations of Abstract Geometrie, they may indeed prove the *Infinite Divisibility* of Matter already granted, but can never evince an *Actual Infinity of Coexistent Parts* in Matter or Space; and by consequence they can
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prove nothing to the Present Purpose. When the Space between the *Asymptote* of some *Hyperboloids* and a Line Parallel thereto is demonstrated to be Infinite, this can only mean that those Figures can never meet tho' drawn out to an Infinite, or rather Indefinite, Length in Imagination; but can never demonstrate that the Reason of their not being capable of meeting in Nature is the Actual Infinity of the Parts of Space between 'em. If such an Actual Infinity of Parts existed in Every Portion of Space, it would as effectually hinder the meeting of any Other Figures whatever. And thus ev'n *Zeno's* Argument against the Possibility of Motion, grounded on the Same Supposition of an Actual Infinity of Parts in Matter and Space, would be no less a Demonstration.

Yet Some, I apprehend, may object, that supposing the Infinite Divisibility of Matter will not infer such an Actual Infinity of Parts, yet since it, at least, infers an Infinite or Eternal Inexhaustibility of Substance, it may serve to demonstrate that there's an Infinite Distance between Matter and Nothing; and by consequence that the Power which created it is no less than Absolutely Infinite.

I reply; That there was no Infinite Distance between *Nothing and Matter* (as was suppos'd in a Former Argument) is as certain as that there ha's been a *Creation*: And that there's no Infinite Distance between *Matter and Nothing* (as this Objection suppose's) is as clear as that there may be an *Annihilation*. Consequently, the Reason of the Infinite Divisibility of Matter is not because it ha's an Infinite Inexhaustibility of Substance, or because it is at an Infinite Distance from Nothing; but 'tis because Division (as we before observ'd) is not a Proper Means of exhausting it or reducing it to Nothing. 'Tis certain Matter lose's Nothing of it's Nature by mere Division; and by consequence, tho' Eternally divided, 'twould stil be at an Equal Distance from Nothing. But 'tis no less certain (on the Principles of our Former Discourse) that the bare Suspension of the Divine Sustainment but for a Moment would exhaust or reduce it to the Nothing from whence

it sprung. 'Tis such a Suspension of the Divine Influence which is the Proper Means of Annihilation; But Division can contribute nothing towards it.

Therefore, for such especially who believe that Matter was Created and Annihilable. to argue that there's an Absolutely Infinite Distance between it and Nothing, only because it can't be exhausted or reduc't to Nothing by mere Division, appear's to be very Unreasonable. 'Tis as if a Philosopher who had seen Ice congeal'd from Water by the Cold, and Know's that it's reducible to Water by the means of Heat, should nevertheless contend that there's such an Infinite Distance between Ice and Water, for no other Reason than because it can never be reduc't to Water by a bare Division or Separation of it's Parts. For Ice, merely by Division, could no more become Water than Matter, by the Same Means, can become Nothing.

As this Infinite Divisibility of Matter is no way serviceable to the Cause in which it's usually engag'd, so it may easily be turn'd against it. For hereby it appear's Undeniyably that the Ideas of *Great* and *Little* are not Absolute but purely Relative. For as there is no Extension Absolutely or Infinitely *Little* or such as to render it a Contradiction that there should be a Less and stil a Less suppos'd to Eternity; so there's a Parity of Reason to conclude that there's no Extension Absolutely or Infinitely *Great*, or of such a Nature as to render it an Absolute Contradiction to suppose a Greater and yet Greater in an Eternal Progression.

Thô, at the same time, it must, I think, be Confest that there may be an Extension (or Expansion) which, thô not merely on account of it's Own Abstracted Nature yet, for some Other Reason may be affirm'd Incapable of any Real Increase. Since in judging of the Natures of Things we are not to consider 'em according to their Abstract Ideas only, but as cloath'd with All their Known Property's. But Simple Extension abstracted from All Property's exist's no where Without the Imagination. And the Universal Extension, as it exist's in Nature (since it's State is so Peculiar) may wel be allow'd to have Some Peculiar

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Propertys distinct from those of any Particular Extension whatever. But those Propertys are only discoverable by the Eye of Reason ; since the Universal Extension , as such , is not the Object of our External Senses. But of This more may be said in the Reply to the following Argument.

Again, The very Same Reason which oblige's us to allow an Infinite Divisibility of Matter wil , it's humbly conceiv'd , as wel oblige us to *deny* an Absolute Infinity of Extension. For , the Reason why we allow an Infinite Divisibility of Matter is not because we can form an Idea of such Division , or conceive in our Minds a Particle to become Less and stil Less *in Infinitum*. 'Tis true , Matter is said sometimes to be Mentally Divisible *in Infinitum* ; but , as I think , Improperly. For when a Particle is by Mental Division reduc't to the Smalness of the Least visible Dust , it soon escape's the Eye of the Mind as wel as that of the Body. The Chief Reason then of our allowing an Infinite Divisibility of Matter is immediately deriv'd from the Nature of Matter ; which we hereby suppose to be in it's very Nature Quantitative or Proportionate. From whence it necessarily follow's that the Least imaginable Particle of it having stil Dimensions which bear a Proportion to each other (as Upper, Under, Sides, and Middle) we find our selves oblig'd to conclude that it's no Absolute Contradiction for These to be separated. But this Same Necessary Proportionateness which establishe's the Infinite or Eternal Divisibility of Matter is (as may appear from an Argument we lately propos'd) Inconsistent with the Absolute Infinity or Immenstity not only of Matter but of All Quantity whatever.

In fine ; From this Infinite Divisibility of Matter it appear's that the Notion of an Absolute Infinity is Unapplicable to any Real Being For one Reason why any Thing is Infinitely Divisible (or Inexhaustible by Division) is because (as we observ'd) the Parts which are separated can never become Actually Infinite in Number. But if (ev'n by the Action of an Almighty Power) they can never become thus Infinite in a state of Separation , so neither may

they be suppos'd to be so in a state of Union. The Reason why the Parts which are separated can never become Actually Infinite is plainly because it's the very Nature of an Absolute Infinity never to be Complete. But Every Real Being cannot but be Complete or of a Determinate Nature.

This ev'n *Aristotle*, e're he was aware, seem's plainly to intimate in his Definition of *Infinite*. For whereas the more Ancient Philosophers Generally and with Reason contented themselves with saying: *That is Infinite beyond which nothing is*; he think's fit to correct 'em by saying: *That only is Infinite which ha's Always Something beyond it*. Which, I take it, can import no less than that it's the Nature of an Absolute Infinity never to be Complete.

Yet I find a late Ingenious Author * is not only Confident in the General that Every Particle of Matter consist's of an Actual Infinity of Infinitely Small Parts (than which according to Him, nothing less is sufficient to fill the Least Finite Space) but pretend's Particularly to prove that the Number of Organical Parts in Animals is thus Infinite.. „ This, says he, is clear both from the Nature „ of Sensation and Nutrition. For, first with reference „ to Sensation; there is not the Least Imaginable Solid „ Part of the Vessels or Muscles but what is Sensible; „ and therefore, say's he, the Organs in Animals which „ convey this Sensation are Infinite in Number.

But this Consequence is not only built on the Supposition that the Parts of the Vessels and Muscles are therefore Absolutely Infinite because Infinitely Divisible (which it's conceiv'd we have already shown to be no very conclusive method of arguing;) but it suppose's too that Each of those imagin'd Infinite Parts is Sensible. But this is what I humbly suppose could never be prov'd tho' such an Infinity of Parts were True. For the Contrary is most Apparent from the following Reasons.

First, We Know that our Sense of Feeling is proportion'd to our Circumstances, and is chiefly design'd for our Pre-

* Dr, *Cheyne* in his Philosophical Princip, of Nat. Rel. p. 16

Preservation. Therefore 'tis enough to suppose that it's diffus'd in such a manner thorow our Bodys as is sufficient to inform us of such Ill Impressions from the Surrounding Bodys as may be prejudicial to us. But the Infinitely Small Parts of the Neighbouring Bodys (if any such Parts should be admitted) are not singly Capable of making such Ill Impressions, and consequently an Infinitely Small Sensation is Unnecessary.

Again, 'Tis not ooly Unnecessary but Contrary to Experience. For we find that the Minuter Parts of Matter are capable of exciting little or no Sensation ev'n in the most Sensible Parts of our Bodys. What Sensation may we then suppose an Infinitely Small Part to be capable of exciting? Yet if there be an Absolute Infinity of Sensible Parts in any Member, each of these may be affected by the Impression of an Infinitely Small Part of the Surrounding Matter.

And then as for Nutrition; say's he, „ Since there „ is no Part of the Body that may not be Increase or „ Diminisht (as is evident from the Cure of Wounds „ in All Parts thorow which the Necessary Fluids of the „ Body can pass) 'tis plain that Every Individuai Point of „ the Animals Body is the Termination of an Organ tho- „ row which the Nutrition may be convey'd.

But tho Every Perceptible Part of an Animal be thus capable of Increase by Nutrition (as being subject to Wounds, and therefore requiring the means of Reparation) wil it therefore follow that Every Infinitely Imperceptible Part of it, tho not liable to any Wounds or Decays, and by consequence needing no immediate Conveyance of Nourishment to repair it, is thus Immediately capable of Increase by Nutrition?

But this Gentleman add's, „ Moreover, seeing the Ca- „ nals of the Body themselves do increase in bulk, may „ decay and be impaired; every assignable Part of these „ Canals must be the termination of some Secretory Duct „ separating a Fluid fit to increase their Dimensions or „ repair their Losses, and so on *in Infinitum*.

But such an Argumentation as this few I believe wil

be perswaded to admit without the Utmost Necessity. And to make it appear that there is such a Necessity to admit it, this Gentleman, I humbly conceive, was bound to prove that the Most Wise and Powerful Author of Nature either could not or would not discover and make use of any other Method of nourishing the more Minute Parts of those Vessels but that which he make's use of in nourishing the Greater Parts, viz, by Proper Ducts and Vessels. Til this be prov'd his Argument for such a *Progressus in Infinitum* in Nutrition will be far from Demonstration.

VII. ARG. 7. Another Argument for the Existence of an Absolutely Immense or Infinite Being ha's been employ'd by *Spinoza*, and adopted by a very Pious and Acute Writer with a much better Design; which is deriv'd from the Nature of an *Absolute Necessity* of Existence. To this effect. A Necessity which is Absolute in its Self or not Depending on any Outward Cause, must be Absolutely Unlimited. For a Necessity which is not Every where the Same is a Consequential Necessity depending on some External Cause. But a Necessity Absolutely such, ha's no Relation to Place or any Thing else. Whatever therefore exist's by an Absolute Necessity in it's Own Nature must needs be Absolutely Infinite or Immense.*

'Tis easy to observe that this Argument conclude's almost in the Same manner as the Second Argument deriv'd from the *Absolute Independence* of the Eternal Being; which ha's been already consider'd. And therefore it might, perhaps, have been conveniently enough reduc't to it, if we had not thought that a Particular Consideration of it in This place might reflect some Light on what was said before.

The Sum of the Argument appear's to be This. If the Deity exist's by a Necessity that was Independent on any Outward Cause (or, which is the Same, was Absolutely Necessary) it follow's that he is Absolutely Immense or Infinite.

* See *Dr. Clarke* of the Being and Attributes of God. p. 45

Infinite. Because Finiteness could only proceed from a Determination or Limitation of that Necessity by some External Cause; which yet could have no Influence on that Nature which had no Dependence on any Cause.

Before we reply 'twil be convenient to give some account of the Principles on which the Learned Dr. proceeds.

Dr. Clarke first establishes a Necessity which (because Absolute or Independent) he infers to be Unlimited, and from thence he concludes that Perfection (which he, in order of Nature, conceives as Posterior * to Necessity) is so too. But this (with due Submission) is, we conceive, to use *Absolute Necessity* in too large a Sense, so as to import a Necessity Independent on Perfection, or a Necessity without any Fundamental Reason either in the Being to which it belongs or in Any Other Being. Which is an Absolute Necessity indeed.

On the Contrary, The Principles we establish't in the Former Book are to this effect. Some Perfection or Perfections of the Eternal Being (having an Absolutely Necessary Connection with All Other Perfections) must be conceived to have Ever had an Absolutely Necessary *Immediate* Connection with Existence. (For tho' Beings Absolutely Unconnected in Existence, such as the Parts of Matter, could not have been in any respect Different if they had existed with an Absolute Necessity (as was prov'd;) yet the Perfections of One and the Same Being, having a Necessary Connection with each other may (for ought appears) be conceived to be Modally Different tho' the Being to which they belong exists with an Absolute Necessity) This Immediate Connection of such Particular Perfection or Perfections with Existence and All Other Perfections Was and Is the Reason of the Absolute Necessity of the Divine Nature, which includes All Possible Perfections. So that the Absolute Necessity of that Adorable Nature is (according to our Manner of Conceiving, tho' without any

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* See Ans. to Letters p. 36. 37.

Real Priority or Posteriority) founded on it's Perfection; that is, because the Divine Nature possess's All Perfections, therefore it exist's *With* (not *By*) an Absolute Necessity. For since that Necessity (which was not so Absolute as to exclude a Fundamental Reason) must either have been founded on the Divine Nature it's Self or else upon Nothing. 'tis, I think, clear that it ought not to be conceiv'd in order before the Divine Nature, but the contrary. And that the Reason of Necessary Existence which was Ever contain'd in the Divine Nature could be no other than Perfection is evident; for otherwise no reason can be assign'd why a Perfect Being should exist with an Absolute Necessity rather than Another.

This being premis'd we reply.

1. That tho' there was no External Cause to Determine or Limit the Original Necessity, yet we conceive it dos'nt follow that it was Absolutely Unlimited. merely because the Abstract Idea of Necessity ha's no Relation either to Place or Limits. To give an Instance of the Same Nature. The Abstract Idea of Necessity, which ha's no more relation to Variety than to Place or Limits but is Simple and Uniform, would incline one to suppose that the Nature which exist's by an Absolute or Independent Necessity must exist without the Least Variety of Any Sort. But this Supposition would be notwithstanding directly Contrary to Reason. For, tho' we Know probably but little of the Divine Nature yet, ev'n Reason (to say nothing of Revelation) assure's us that it include's a Diversity of Essential Propertys, such as Intelligence and Effective Power, whose Notions can't with any tolerable Sense be confounded. For tho' Absolute Necessity, if suppos'd not to be founded on Perfection, could admit of no Variety of Any Sort yet, if suppos'd to be so founded, (tho' One and Uniform, or not agreeable to more Beings than One) it can't but infer whatever Variety is included in the Nature of Perfection.

This shew's the Vanity of Arguing merely from Abstract Ideas. For the Propertys of Things must be consider'd in their Connections as they exist in Nature; not Absolutely or Separately as they exist in Our Imaginations only. Thus in the Present Case; As to Know some-
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what of the Nature of the Perfection of the Deity we must consider his Necessity of Existence, so if we would gain a more Complete Notion of the Nature of that Necessity we must, it seem's, consider it in it's relation to his Perfection. For (as was elsewhere observ'd) tho' the Divine Necessity of Existence was Absolute or not Dependent on any External Cause, yet 'twas Ever connected with and founded on the Divine Perfection; and therefore was such as the Nature of Perfection requir'd. But the Nature of the Supreme Perfection not only requir'd Some Variety, but was Fixt and Determinate: As we humbly conceive was shown in the Former Book.

2. There's abundant Reason to assert (as we did elsewhere) that Determination or Finiteness in the Absolute Sence is no Proper Effect of Any Cause, and that therefore it may very wel consist with an Absolute or Independent Necessity of Existence. 'Tis true, some Particular Modifications of it may properly enough be said to be Caus'd; or a Cause may have the Power to produce it's Effect either with more or Less Limitation according to it's Own Pleasure. But we can't say that the Wil or Power of any Cause was Absolutely or in the General the Reason of the Finiteness of it's Effects: Unless some Cause could be found Capable either of bestowing or withholding an Infinity as it please's.

3. Finiteness in the Absolute Sence, and not Infinity, appear's in the General to exist with an Absolute Necessity in the very Nature of Things. For Every Being has a Positive Complete and Determinate Nature; whereas our Notion of an Absolute Infinity is Negative, Incomplete, and Indetermin'd, and therefore (as it's humbly conceiv'd) unapplicabie to any Real Being. We speak indeed of a Positive Infinity. But this is to unite Words whose Ideas can never be united by Us nor so much as prov'd to be consistent in Themselves. But if Every Being as such is of a Positive or Determinate Nature. then how Absolute soever the Necessity is with which any Being exist's, that Necessity can't but be determin'd in it's Self, tho' not determin'd by any External Cause.

Here I can't omit the Testimony of a Late Learned
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and Dignifi'd Divine of the Church of England *, „ The
 „ Truth is , says he, this Word *Infinite* confound's our
 „ Notions of God , and make's the most Perfect and
 „ Excellent Being the most perfectly Unknown to us,
 „ For, *Infinite* is only a Negative Term and signify's [in the
 „ Absolute Sence] that which hath no End, and there-
 „ fore no Positive or Determin'd Nature; and therefore
 „ is Nothing. An [Absolutely] Infinite Being , had not
 „ Use and Custom reconcil'd us to that Expression, would
 „ be thought Nonsense and Contradiction, For Every
 „ Real Being ha's a Certain and Determin'd Nature, and
 „ therefore is not Infinite in This Sence; which is so far
 „ from being a Perfection that it signify's nothing Real.

4. Yet tho' the Original Necessity do'sn't appear to have
 been Absolutely Indetermin'd or Unlimited in it's Self,
 it might notwithstanding both be sufficiently Absolute
 and, by consequence such as render'd it equally impossible
 for it's Subject either not to be, or to be Other than it is.
 That it could not but be sufficiently Absolute is Clear;
 inasmuch as 'twas not in the least Dependent on nor De-
 termin'd by any Proper Cause. And that it's Subject
 could not but exist , and exist such as it actually do's
 is alike plain ; because (as we have already seen) That
 Necessity was Absolutely connected with the Highest Per-
 fection, which, in the General, we are assur'd could not
 but exist ; and likewise because That Perfection (as we
 humbly conceive was prov'd both in This and the Former
 Book) is in it's very Nature Fixt and Determinate.

'Tis confest we are unable to discover whence it pro-
 ceeded that Necessity of Existence is thus connected with
 the Other Perfections of the Divine Nature; or (which
 is the Same) how it was a Contradiction or Impossibili-
 ty that any Particular Perfection should not have been.
 And no wonder ; for this can never be discover'd or ex-
 plain'd unless we could have a Distinct and Adequate Idea
 of the Immediate Reason of Absolute or Independent Ne-
 cessity

* Discourse of the Trin. p. 77.

cessity of Existence. 'Tis certain that sometimes a Contradiction can't appear to be so to Us, if we don't sufficiently understand the Property's of it's Subject. This Proposition, *A Triangle hath not three Angles equal to Two Right ones*, can't appear to be a Contradiction to One who is not wel acquainted with the Property's of a Triangle. And in like manner, The Proposition, *Perfect Wisdom might not have existed*, (thô a Contradiction and Impossibility in the Nature of Things) do'sn't appear to be a Contradiction to Us, because we want an Adequate Notion of the Divine Nature (which necessarily exist's with This Perfection) and by consequence of the Immediate Reason of the Existence of this Perfection which it includes.

But, say's the Learned Dr, *To suppose a Finite Being to be Selfexistent is to suppose it's a Contradiction for That Being not to exist the Absence of which may yet be conceiv'd without a Contradiction. For if a Being can without a Contradiction be absent from One Place, it may without a Contradiction be absent likewise from Another Place and from All Places.*

To this (with all due Submission) I think may be reply'd; That a Thing may be Absolutely Necessary (or so Necessary as to render it an Absolute Contradiction in Nature for it not to Be) thô it's Absence may be conceiv'd either in Whole or in Part without any Contradiction to Our Ideas: Or there may (as we just now prov'd) be a Contradiction in Nature which do'sn't appear to be such to Us.

We amuse our selves with Abstract Ideas and are easily deceiv'd, if in Every Case we wil argue from Them (which are the Creatures of the Mind) to the Things as they exist In Nature. The Necessary Existence of a Thing may be never the less Certain, thô its Abstract Idea in Our Imagination may not include any Necessity of Existing: Or a Thing may be Necessary in it's Real Connection with Other Things, thô it may not appear to be so consider'd Singly or in it's Self. Thus the Perfection of *Wisdom* do'sn't include any Necessity of Existence in it's Abstract Idea; yet, being necessarily connected with the
Other

Other Divine Perfections, we are assur'd it could not but Exist. Wherefore tho' the Idea of *Finiteness* include's no Absolute Necessity consider'd Abstractly or in it's Self; yet it do'sn't follow that nothing but what is Absolutely Infinite exist's with an Absolute Necessity. If the Highest Possible Perfection include's not an Absolute Infinity (as we humbly conceive was shown in the Former Book) it follow's that it's Subject, tho' existing *as such* with an Absolute Necessity, need not be assert'd to be thus Infinite.

Again, an Abstract Idea may on the Contrary seem to include Necessity when the Thing it represent's we are sure could never have existed Abstractly or without any Connection with Somewhat else. Thus Extension (tho' it's Abstract Idea seem's to include necessity of Existence) could never have existed Abstractly or without Connection with Something which is not Extension. For Absolute Necessity of Existence (as was prov'd) suppose's in it's Subject a Connection of whatever Attributes import Perfection. Wherefore as we ought not to consider That as Necessarily existent Alone tho' seemingly Necessary in Idea, which could never have existed thus Alone in Nature; so, it seem's, we ought not to consider any thing as Incapable of existing Necessarily in it's Connection in Nature merely because it include's no such Necessity in it's Abstract Idea.

The Question (when we dispute of the Capable Subject of an Absolute Necessity of Existence) is not concerning *Wisdom*, *Power*, *Finiteness* (or *Completeness of Essence*) or any Other Attribute or Mode in it's *Abstract* Idea; but 'tis concerning Perfection in it's *Complex* Idea. 'Tis not either *Power* or *Wisdom* or any Other Perfection which is capable of existing with an Absolute Necessity in it's Particular Nature (without Connection with any Other Perfection) but 'tis the *Deity* who possesse's All Perfections, which is capable of thus existing.

But How then can we have a Suitable Apprehension of the Greatest and most Excellent of Beings if the Opinion of his Absolute Immensity or Infinity may not be admitted?

I answer,

I answer, That Being must, 'tis humbly conceiv'd, be own'd to be *Perfect* with respect to Space or Extension which Actually possess's, pervade's, or rather, include's All Space, so as to be Every Where Essentially Present. That Being In whom and By whom are All Things, and Without or Beyond whom nothing either is or Can be. Such a Being (since it include's All Perfections) may very wel be suppos'd to be Absolutely Necessary without being asserted to be Absolutely Infinite. Such a Being we may be assur'd was by an Absolute or Independent Necessity such as the Nature of Perfection Requir'd. But that the Nature of Perfection requir'd not an Absolute Infinity of Any Sort ha's been, 'tis conceiv'd, sufficiently prov'd. *

But if we wil needs be more particular in our Enquirys, we forget the Modesty that so wel become's the Imperfection of our Nature and Circumstances. For since (as we lately observ'd) we can't explain how All Other Perfections of the Eternal Being Known to Us had Ever an Absolutely Necessary Connection with each other and Existence; we ought not to wonder that the Infirmary of our Nature will not permit us so fully to unfold the Secrets of his Essence as to discover how his Perfections are the Reason of his Existing So and no Otherwise with respect to Space. Especially since we have reason to believe he possess's many Perfections Unknown to Us.

VIII. ARG. 8. Another Argument deriv'd from the same *Absolute Necessity* of Existence is thus deliver'd by the Learned Dr. Scot, † „ In conceiving of God we must ascribe „ to him *Infinite Fullness* of Being, by which he is so „ Infinitely remov'd from Not-being that he cannot but Be; „ and in thus conceiving of him we attribute to him Necessary Existence.

But this, 'tis humbly conceiv'd, may admit of the following Reply.

1. That Fullness of Being [or Fullness of Perfection] may

* See Chap. 4. Book 1.

† Christian Life Part. 2. Vol. 1. Ch. 6.

may very wel be without an Absolute Infinity, ha's beeri already shown in the Former Book. *

2. Such Fullness of Perfection as we then attributed to the Eternal Being (since it as effectually exclude's All Imperfection as ev'n the Notion of Infinity it's Self) may be wel conceiv'd as a Sufficient Foundation of Necessary Existence. For since (as was then observ'd) a Possibility of Ceasing to Be can no where be without Imperfection, we may in the General be assur'd that where no Imperfection is, there can be no Possibility of Ceasing to Be, or there must needs be Necessary Existence.

3. An Infinite Distance or Remoteness from *Not-being* is an Improper Manner of Speaking. 'Tis true the Irreconcilable Opposition between Two Contradictory Terms make's us apt to imagin a Sort of Space or Distance between 'em, to which we are us'd to give the Title of Infinite. But 'tis plain that to talk of such an Infinite Distance is to speak Improperly, and to expose our selves to the danger of being amus'd with Words in stead of Things. Besides, that there's no need of any Real Infinity of Perfection to found such an Infinite Distance appear's from the Confession of the Assertors of an Absolute Infinity Themselves. For These (as appear's by a Former Argument) suppose a like Infinite Distance between the Not-being and Being of Creatures, without attributing to them any Infinity of Perfection.

IX, ARG. 9. Not only the Nature of Necessity but that of *Possibility* ha's furnisht an Argument of an Absolutely Infinite Being. For I find a late Judicious Writer arguing to this effect. † „ God, say's he, as he is the Actual Cause „ of whatever Is, so he is the Possible Cause of whatever „ is Possible to Be. Wherefore, since it's evident that „ no Limits can be set by our Thoughts to the Number „ and Extent of Possibilitys, but that More may be conceiv'd to be produc'd, and stil More without End or „ Bounds,

* See Chap. 4. B. 1.

† *How* in his *Living Temple* Part I. p. 161, 163.

„ Bounds, Consequently the Divine Power must be own'd
 „ to have an Actual [Absolute] Infinity in proportion to this
 „ Possible one.

To this I reply. 'Tis manifest that Possibilities in General can no otherwise be suppos'd Infinite than as any Particular Line or Number which we may conceive in our Minds may be said to be so; viz, inasmuch as we can't in our Imaginations arrive at any Fixt End or Limits of Progression in the Addition of Other Possibilities to those we first imagin'd. Thus we must conceive of the Infinity of Possible Effects; unless we wil be guilty of the Trifling of the Schools, and talk of Possibilities as of Real Beings.

But tho' we experience such an Endless Liberty of Progression in such Addition in our Minds, yet 'tis humbly conceiv'd there's no arguing from Imagination to Reality, nor concluding that it must be in Every respect in Nature as in Our Phantasys.

When we conceive an Infinite or Unlimited Increase of Coëxistent Effects, we consider it only as to it's *Notional Possibility*, or to that Non-Repugnance which we conceive in the Idea of Infinite or Endless Increase of Number and Extension consider'd Abstractly or in it's Self. But an *Abstracted or Absolute Possibility* is a very Improper Expression. For Possibility in a Proper Sense, ha's a Necessary Relation to *Power*; and Nothing can be said to be Really or Properly Possible but what is Produciible or Within the Power of Some Real Agent. If therefore we attempt to determin any thing concerning the *Real Possibility* of such an Infinite or Eternal Increase, we must, it seem's, consider it not Only *Absolutely* or as not Repugnant to the Idea we have of it in our Imaginations, but *Relatively* or as Agreeable to the Idea of Some Power of whose Real Existence we were Antecedently convinc't. If we, first, could demonstrate the Existence of an Absolutely Immenſe Being who is the Subject of a Power thus Infinitely extended with reference to Space, we might then safely conclude that there's a Proportionable Infinite Possibility. But 'tis humbly conceiv'd, we can't on the con-

trary argue (as in the Present Case) from the Mere Abstract Notion of an Infinite Possibility in *Our Imaginations* to the Real Existence of such a Power and Possibility in *Nature*.

To explain this by a Parallel Instance. If a Person, having first prov'd the Existence of a Power that is Perfect, and made it appear that a Perfect Power can't but extend to whatever is a Capable Object of Power or include's not a Contradiction, should proceed to prove that the Act of Creation implies no Contradiction, and then at last should conclude that therefore Creation is a Possibility (i.e. Effectible by the Exercise of That Perfect or Allmighty Power whose Existence he had before demonstrated;) I conceive there could be no Reasonable Exception against such a Method of Arguing. But if, on the Contrary, he should say, I plainly perceive there's no Contradiction in the Supposition of the Creation or Production of a Thing that was Not, and should from thence immediately infer that a Power capable of Creation exist's; this would be a very Preposterous way of demonstrating. Which yet is the Same Method with that of the Present Argument.

Nor is the Perfection of Power to be measur'd by the Extent of it's Activity; but to be conceiv'd in a Relation to it's Objects consider'd in Themselves. 'Tis, for Instance, as great a Demonstration of the Perfection of Power to produce Two such Beings as the Earth and Moon, whose Distance it Comparatively so Small, as to produce Two Others as distant as the Earth and Fixt Stars. These Acts are equally Perfect in Themselves; and if the Latter seem's to Excell, 'tis not because it argue's a Greater Perfection of Power in the Agent, but because it import's a Larger Sphere of Activity. Which yet is merely Accidental to Power, and can by consequence add nothing to the Perfection of it as such.

But if the Present Argument can't assure us of the Existence of a Power *Extensively* Infinite or Immense, much less can it prove a Power *Intensively* so [i. e.] Infinite in Degree, For if (as we humbly conceive was shown)

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the mere Production of a Thing from Nothing is no sufficient Proof of an Infinite Degree of Power, neither could the Successive Production of Any Imaginable Number of Any Assignable Perfection amount to a Proof of a Power Infinite in Degree. For Every Capable Effect is Equally Producing by a Power which is Perfect. And, by consequence, an Eternal Repetition of the Act could not, in the Present Case, yield a greater Argument of Power than a Single Act. The Being that can produce a Sand or a Drop from Nothing can by the Same Degree of Power Successively produce a Mountain or an Ocean. I confess, the Continu'd or Frequent Repetition of the Same Act (especially if in any degree Laborious) argues the Greater Degree of Power in Created or Imperfect Agents. But the Case must be own'd to be Different with respect to the Creator of the World; unless we imagin him capable of Fatigue, and (with the Absurd *Anthropomorphites*) interpret his Rest after the Creation in a Proper and Literal Sense.

X. ARG. 10, Another Argument which I find is us'd by *Spinoza* as a Proof of an Absolutely Infinite Being is as follow's. Say's he, „ To be capable of not existing is a Sign of Impotence, and on the contrary, to be „ able to exist is a Token of Power; if then Whatever „ actually exist's is Finite, it follow's that Finites are More „ Powerful than an Absolutely Infinite; which, say's he, „ is Absurd. Therefore either nothing at all exist's, or „ else there is such a Thing as an Absolutely Infinite „ Being. *

This Argument, for ought I know, might prove something, if any man could make appear that the Notions of a Finite and such an Infinite Being are equally Possible or Consistent. But 'tis humbly conceiv'd the Contrary will be sufficiently evident to any that shal consider what has been already said, and what may be farther observ'd in the following Chapters.

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* *Spinoza* in *Eth. Paat. I. Prop. 11.*

There is yet Another Proof attempted from *the Infinite Desires and Appetites of the Soul after the Supreme Good*. But, this rather seem's a Rhetorical Flourish than an Argument of Weight: Not to insist upon the Reflection it seem's to cast on the Wisdom of the Great Creator by supposing him to have implanted in us Appetites Absolutely disproportion'd to our Capacities and which, by consequence, can never be satisfi'd.

C H A P. III.

THUS have we finish'd the History and Proofs of this Opinion both from Scripture and Reason. We shal next proceed to consider it's *Usefulness* or Significancy to the Ends of Religion and Morality.

In the Former Book we discover'd abundant Reason to attribute nothing to the Deity but what is Most Perfect in it's Kind. For being Necessarily Existent and the Fountain from which All Other Natures deriv'd, we have Invincible Evidence that he possess's the Highest Perfection that either Is or is possible to Be. We can therefore have no room to doubt but that the Genuin Notion of the Deity is that of *The Most Perfect Being*¹, or That Being whose very Nature include's Whatever belong's to the True Idea of Perfection. Our Present Task wil be to enquire a little more Particularly whether a Positive or Absolute Infinity be a Necessary Ingredient of That Idea.

Now this it's conceiv'd may be best determin'd by the Consideration of Some of the Principal Ideas which are allow'd to compose it. By which we may judge of the rest.

1. As to the Idea of *Power*. I suppose whoever shal consider the Divine Power (as we have done in the Former Book) under the Notion of an Ability to do whatever imply's not a Contradiction, wil be own'd to conceive it in the most Suitable and Perfect Manner: Since this is to extend it to Every Object of Power. For as for Contradictions or Absurdities, they are Pure Nothings; and, by consequence, no Objects of Power. If a Contradiction can by Any Power be caus'd to exist, it must be by the

the Conjunction of Two Terms which are Absolutely Destructive of each other; so that if the Former be caus'd, the Latter can't be caus'd without the Destruction of the Former. For example, A Being that's entirely Man and entirely Horse is a Contradiction in the Nature of Things; since the Entire Nature of a Man Absolutely exclude's or destroy's that of a Horse, and so on the Contrary. But when Two Things Absolutely exclude or destroy each other, their Conjunction must be (as was said) a Pure Nothing, and by consequence, no Object of Power. Power may therefore be Perfect without an Ability to effect Contradictions: Since Without That, it may extend to Whatever is an Object of Power. For in making an Estimate of the Perfection of Effective Power we must consider it with relation to it's *Objects*, without any regard to the Extent of Space. The Production of a Dust from Nothing appear's to be as great an Instance of Effective Power as such, as the Production of the Entire Globe of the Earth. The Degree, and consequently the Perfection of Power is in Both Cases the Same. And if the Latter Act include's Something more magnificent in it's Idea, 'tis purely on account of Somewhat Accidental to Power as such. As was elsewhere observ'd.

This then is that Idea of Effective Power which is most agreeable to the Nature of the Perfect Being. Whatever Conception come's short of This is evidently too Mean and Unworthy of the Eternal Nature; and whatever exceed's it is Absurd and Unnecessary.

But one must be very ignorant not to know how Different this Idea is from that which the Opinion of an Absolute Infinity has oblig'd Some to entertain. 'Twas That Opinion which Induc't the Ingenious *Des Cartes* to attempt the Subversion of the Only solid Foundation of Truth and Certainty which (as was observ'd in the Former Book) ly's in the *Immutable Nature of God*, by extending the Divine Power to the reconciling of Contradictions; thereby making Truth to have depended entirely on the *Indetermin'd Wil* of God. Of which more anon. And 'twas partly That Opinion of an Absolutely Infinite Power which tempted so

many Others (at least by Plain and inevitable Consequence) to shake the Fundamental Principles of Religion by deriving the worst Events and Actions from the Divine Causality. And tho' the more Judicious Divines, considering the Extravagance and Absurdity of these Notions, are wont to explain the Infinity of the Divine Power in such a sence as include's no more than is contain'd in the former Description; yet (since the Idea of an Absolute Infinity both Extensive and Intensive admit's no such Restriction or Limitation,) this amount's, at least, to a Confession that when the Word *Infinity* in the Absolute Sence is apply'd to this Attribute of Power 'tis wholly Useless and Insignificant.

2. Let us consider the Idea of *Knowledge*. This being an Undoubted Attribute of the Same most Perfect Nature, Reason will assure us ought to be conceiv'd in the Same most Perfect Manner. To which end 'tis humbly suppos'd we need not imagin it to be Absolutely Infinite. 'Tis perhaps sufficient if we conceive it to be extended to whatever is a Fit and Capable Object. This we have observ'd Some of the Patrons of an Absolute Infinity freely to own with reference to the Attribute of Power; and 'tis difficult to imagin what should make 'em so unwilling to do so in the Present Case. If there be Some Actions which our Reason assure's us are Unfit and therefore Incapable Effects of the Deitys more *Immediate Causality*; are there not Some Events too which it equally assure's us are no less Incapable Objects of his *Remote Causality* (I mean his Particular Efficacious Decrees) and, consequently, of his Particular Infallible Foreknowledge? For, that the Decrees of God are to be suppos'd as the Foundation of his Foreknowledge may, we conceive, appear from what we shal have opportunity to observe in the Following Chapter.

3. To conclude with the Idea of Perfection with reference to *Space*. Whoever shal conceive the Deity to be that Absolutely Necessary Being in which and by which *All Things live, and move, and have their beings*, and beyond which there neither is nor can be any thing; or that Being which

which pervade's, sustain's, and surpasse's All Others Must, we humbly conceive, be allow'd to think as Piously and Magnificently of his Perfection as either the Scripture or Reason require or warrant. That Being whose Nature possesse's, or rather includes, the Utmost Possible Space, is most certainly Perfect with respect to Space. Such a Being is likewise Properly and Incomprehensibly *Infinite* or *Immense* inasmuch, as no Being can Measure or Bound it; nor ev'n Humane Imagination it's Self. This *Negative* or *Relative* Infinity of the Eternal, Independent, and most Perfect Being neither Scripture nor Reason, I think, wil suffer us to deny. But whatever is more than this, thô it may serve to raise wonder and astonishment in the Ignorant at the Divulgers of such Sublime and Mysterious Notions; yet it's, we humbly conceive, Unnecessary, and can in reality add nothing either to the Perfection of the Divine Idea, or to that High Veneration with which is strike's the Mlnds of All Serious and Considering Men.

Upon the Whole, from what ha's been here and elsewhere observ'd, 'tis natural to reflect on that Bold and Magisterial Method of Speculation iutroduc't by the *Platonists* and *Schoolmen* who, as Dr. More observd, were wont to spread out every Attribute of God to as Infinite Excess as they could, forgetting That One Necessary Measure of All his Attributes, viz, That They be no farther apply'd to him than as they imply Perfection.

CHAP. IV.

WHETHER shal have prov'd an Opinion to be both Groundless and Useless needs proceed but One Step farther and prove it *Pernicious*. Our next Enquiry therefore shal be into the Effects or Consequences of this Opinion of an Absolute Intinuity.

These we shal perceive to regard the Deity under a Twofold Notion, viz, as consider'd either as he is in Himself, or with reference to Us. Of the Former Sort is

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I. The Opinion of his *Inextension*, as 'tis usually expressed, or his being absolutely without Magnitude or Dimensions. This has been thought a Plain and Immediate Consequence of that Principle. For Dimensions, whose very Notion appeared to include End or Limits, could not (as was rightly infer'd) belong to a Being Absolutely Infinite and Immense. For it's demonstrable that no Possible Number of Finites can constitute such an Infinite.

This Opinion being once entertain'd, 't is scarce conceivable what a Train of Riddles and Paradoxes it drew after it. For thence the *Platonists* and the rest of *Anaximander's* Commentators first began to Infer what is usually call'd his *Indistance*. For Distance being only a Relative Conception of Space, consequently it could not, as they rightly concluded, be conceiv'd in a Being who was, as they imagin'd, absolutely without Amplitude and Dimensions.

Thus far they proceeded in Absurdity; their next Step was Impiety. For since they found it impossible to conceive a Being Without Amplitude and Dimensions any otherwise than as a mere Mathematical or Indivisible Point; they began to speak of the Deity in the like Diminutive Terms and, in effect, imprison'd the Great Creator within the Smallest Dust of his Creation. But fearing lest this Consequence of their Zeal for the Divine Absolute Infinity should be thought to destroy it, they quickly solv'd the Difficulty with a Mystery, and gravely concluded that it was no Impossibility for such an Infinite Being to exist Entire, tho' in a certain Atomical Manner, not only in One but in Every Individual Particle of the Universe at Once. For this Worthy Discovery we are particularly indebted to *Plotinus*, one of *Plato's* Disciples, who oblig'd the World with Two Whole Books to demonstrate that One and the Same Being may be All of it entirely in each distinguishable Part of the World.

This Philosopher it seem's had found the Secrete of producing More Deitys out of One than the fruitful Phanys of All the Poëts in their *Theogonies* could ever make. And

tis to Him that we are chiefly indebted for the most plausible Argument to support the Great Myſterie of *Transubſtantiation*.

But fearing Good Man! leſt this Diſcovery of his ſhould be thought Inconſiſtent with the *Unity* of God, he made bold to ſtretch the Myſterie a little farther by concluding not onely that it's the Property and Privilege of the Abſolutely Infinite Being to exiſt Whole in Every Particulate of the World, but that he ha's an Undoubted Prerogative of exiſting Whole in the whole of it too; ſo as to be *One Individual Innumerable Univerſal Deity*. All which Platonical Myſteries were afterwards receiv'd as Articles of Faith by the Schoolmen, and are compris'd in that Vulgar Maxim of their's, viz, *Deus eſt Totus in Toto et Totus in qualibet Parte Mundi*, God is *Whole in the Whole and Whole in Every Part of the World*, Myſteries that require a degree of Faith beyond that of Miracles; a Faith which can transform Contradictions into Arguments with a *Credo quia Impoſſibile eſt*.

Tho' 'tis next to Impoſſible to ſpeak of ſuch Extravagances as theſe and, at the ſame time, to preſerve that Gravity which is ſo neceſſary in diſcourſes of this Nature; yet I conceive it may not be amiſs to have obſerv'd thus much, to the end it may be ſeen how ſtrangely the name of Learning ha's been miſapply'd to Whimſys of this Kind, and how profanely the Sacred Name of God ha's been abus'd to conſecrate the moſt Egregious Nonſence.

That theſe Opinions met with no Entertainment among many of the Primitive Chriſtians may appear from divers Paſſages in *Tertullian*. Thus in *Lib: 2. contra Marcionem*: ſay's he, *Who* (viz, among the Chriſtians of That Age) *wil deny that God is a Body [corpus] tho' he is likewise a Spirit*. Where by *Body*, is probably meant no more than what has Some ſort of Amplitude. For we read of ſome Philoſophers in *Laërtius*, who call'd ſpace *Σώμα αἰόν* or an *Immaterial Body*. 'Tis therefore likely that in *Tertullian's* time the word *Body* might be generally us'd, at leaſt among the Chriſtians, in ſuch a ſenſe. Tho' in the time of *St. Auſtin* it appear's to have been diſus'd with reſpect to the Deity. For, ſay's he, *Tolle omne Corpus. Conceive not God as a Body*. And

And as these Opinions gain'd no Credit with the more Primitive Christians, so they have found Many Opposers in the Latter Ages of Christianity, and have prov'd no small Occasion of Scandal to Atheistical Wits. Mr. *Hobbes* may serve for an Instance : Who in his Book *de Homine* p: 72. tell's us that tho' the Scripture acknowledge's *Spirits*, yet it no where say's that they are *without Dimensions*. And, in the preceding page, say's he, *Substance without Dimensions are Words which flatly contradict each other.*

These are Consequences of Absolute Infinity which have been commonly confest and vindicated. But there's Another which (tho' it was never so fortunate as to obtain the Decree of a General Council in it's favour yet) may, perhaps, claim as true a Relation to that Principle as any Other. And that is the Opinion of the *Nullibists*.

'Tis wel known that *Weigelius* was the Reviver of this Extravagance among Christians. For One Assertion of his (among divers Others relishing of the Height of Enthusiasm and Distraction) was *That Spiritual Beings* (since conceiv'd to be Unextended or without Dimensions) *are No where and yet Every where.* But the Chief Patron of this Profound Myserie of Nullibism was *Des Cartes*. A Philosopher that ha's render'd himself remarkable for these Three Confident Assertions, viz, *That whatever Think's is Immaterial; That whatever is Extended, or ha's Dimensions, is Material; and That Whatever is Unextended, or Without Dimensions, is no Where.* Which Last Assertion (perhaps the Truest) is no other in effect than a frank Confession of what the *Schools* labour'd to conceal under an Insignificant and Arbitrary Distinction between the *Locus* of a Body and the *Ubi* of a Spirit; which it seem's the less Metaphysical *Cartesians* find themselves unable to comprehend.

From this Conceit that the Deity is no Where Substantially, there soon sprung another, viz the opinion that his Omnipresence and Omnipotence are the same; or that he's no otherwise Present with his Creatures than by his Power and Efficacy. The like to which is by some asserted

ted of All other Spiritual Beings. And this is that notion of a Spirit which deservedly gave such Offense to Mr. Gildon *. For indeed, Power without a Subject is, in plain English, a *Powerful Nothing*.

A Late Author having spent many Pages in disputing against the Vulgar Opinion of *Unextended Substance*, at last very confidently advance's This of a *separately-existing Power* in it's Stead. In which he do's but act over the Same Part in disguise, which he before had hiss'd and exploded as too ridiculous for a Man of sense. For after all, this Opinion will be found to be no other in-effect but the same *Unextended Substance* which he so much condemn's.

For tho he suppose's the Divine Power actually to reach every Part of the Universe, yet that he affirm's it so to do without any Proper Extension in-it's self is evident. And that this Separately-existent *Unextended Power* to which he give's the name of *Deity* must, according to Him, be understood to be a *Substance* in the very same sense wherein the Deity ha's been usually asserted to be so, is equally manifest. Both because he asserts it to *subsist by it's self*, or without a Subject, and because he allow's it to *support* or sustain whatever else exist's. Which, if I don't mistake, is the Complete Notion of *Substance* as vulgarly attributed to the Deity. For as for Accidents of Inhesion, as they are call'd, they are wont to be remov'd from the Idea of God.

But let us briefly consider his Proofs of such a separately-existent Power.

This he, first of all, attempt's to prove from the Nature of *Motion*. " Which, say's he *, hath a Distinct Essence from the Matter in which it is; tho we can hardly find Words to express it's Quiddity; i: e: (as he afterwards explain's his meaning) tho it's neither Substance nor Accident.

But admitting Motion to be as much a Reality as he please's, yet-'tis conceiv'd, that unless he can prove the
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* See Oracles of Reason p: 187.

* Grand Essay p4.

Possibility of it's Separate Existence without Dependence on any subject, it can be of no Advantage to him in the Present Case. For the Question is not concerning the Reality of Power but concerning it's Separability. But What a Strange Motion must that needs be which would be the Motion of Nothing!

But he proceed's to Scripture Proofs. And particularly, he quote's those Texts where God is said to have taken of the *Spirit* (or *Power* as he explain's it) and transferd it to Another Subject; and where *Virtue* (or *Power*) is said to have gone forth from our Saviour on the Woman's touching him. From whence he conclude's that Power can't be an Accident; because an Accident can't pass from One Subject to Another without Inhesion in the Conveyance.

But, since nothing is more certain than that the Scriptures are not always to be understood in a Literal Sense, how shal we be assur'd that these Expressions aren't Tropical?

This he afterwards seem's to think a reasonable Objection. And therefore he add's that, tho' it should be suppos'd that these Scripture Phrases aren't to be understood in a Proper or Literal Sense, yet he conceiv's that when Power is said to pass from One Person to Another it must import, at least, some New Real Power superadded, which the Person had not before. And this he imagin's wil be sufficient for his Purpose,

But, again, How shal we be assur'd that among all the Improper or Tropical Methods of Speech to be met with in Scripture, these Expressions aren't of that Kind which we call Metonymical; or that the Cause is not here put for the Effect; the Spirit, Virtue, or Power for the Result of it's Operation? For if so, (as it's most rational to suppose) they can't so much as be allow'd to import the Infusion or Transition of any New Power, but only the Production of a New Effect by the Same Original or Divine Power. Thus, when God is said to have taken of the Spirit which was upon *Moses* and to have put it on the Seventy Elders, no more can necessarily be infer'd to the Present purpose than that the Effects of the same Divine

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Power which had assisted and actuated *Moses* in the Discharge of his Office did afterwards discover themselves in a lesser degree in his Coadjutors. And when Virtue is said to have gone out of our Saviour, no more needs be understood than that the Miraculous Effect which was then wrought proceeded from the Divine Power which acted in and by the Blessed Jesus.

But by this time the Gentleman think's fit to lay aside the Bible and again to betake himself to Reason. Say's he p: 175. *The Original Power can't but have a Separate Existence; for it gave Being to it's self and Every Thing else.*

This is a Touch of the *Platonick* and *Cartesian* Divinity of which we discours'd before; and, as I take it, need's no Confutation.

But, say's he, *It's a Contradiction to affirm that the Original Power inheres in a Subject: For this would be, in effect, to deny it's being the Original Power; inasmuch as the Subject must have a Priority of Existence.*

I must confess my self incapable of comprehending the force of this Reasoning. Could he need to be inform'd either that Necessary Existence is annex to Every Particular Property of the Eternal Being; or that Necessary Existence admit's of no Real Priority or Posteriority? Can any man need a Demonstration to convince him that the Case is very different between the Creator of the World and the Effects of Humane Art?

But to give this Hypothesis it's due; It must, I think, be confess'd that it's at least as Ingenious as That of the *Indian Philosopher* of whom Mr. *Locke* speak's. For Power without a Subject may, for ought I know, yield as good a support to the World as the Elephant and Tortoise. And could any of our Projectors so far improve on this Notion as to discover the Secret of extracting Power from it's Subject, he might gratifie the Age with the Method of building Castles in the Air without the help of *Æsop's* grosser Invention of Eagles and Baskets.

To be more serious in a Matter of this Concern. Did not this Gentlemen profess so fairly in some Places of his Book, his Management would almost incline one

to suspect his Deity to be no other than the Power or Activity which he suppose's to be in Matter. For while he bestow's *Selfactive Power* on All Matter, he contend's that the Deity is nothing else but *Power*. And while he deny's the Deity to be an Immaterial Substance and choose's rather to call him *an Immaterial Being*, he pretend's to prove that the Power of Matter is a Distinct Being from it's Subject, tho' no Substance: Which he conceiv's to be a Title only agreeable to Matter. And that which will possibly render him yet more suspected with Some, is what he subjoyn's concerning the Inconceivableness of a Power's existing without any Subject, Which seem's to imply that whatever he had before asserted with reference to the Separate Existence of a Divine Power was nothing but Pretext and Artifice.

I wou'd not be understood to insinuate this to have been his Real Opinion. But, however that may have been, 'tis certain we can't be too much aware of such Super-refin'd Notions as These, lest they be found to leave us nothing but the Name and Shadow of a Deity. But to proceed.

From the Opinion of the Deity's being absolutely Unextended our New Cartesians have infer'd that he is nothing else but *Cogitation*. And thus his *Omnipresence* is by Them explain'd by an *Universal Cogitation*; i: e: they assert that he is for no other Reason Every where than because he Think's and is Conscious Every where. This is the Opinion of *Poiret, Roel &c.* who in This have chosen to desert their Master *Des Cartes*, * and to follow the sentiments of Some of the Schoolmen, who probably deriv'd this Opinion together with that of his Inextension from the Notion of his Absolute Infinity. Against these Schoolmen *Aquinas* dispute's in Sum: p: j. q: 54, 55.

2. Another Consequence of the Opinion of an Absolute Infinity is that of the *Absolute Simplicity* of God. By which

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* See *Cart: Resp. ad Obj: III.* where he assert's there can be no Act without a Subject.

is meant the Real Identity of whatever Perfections are attributed to the Divine Nature. *

That it was not without great Appearance of Reason that this was reputed a Genuin Consequence of that Principle is certain. For, supposing the Absolute Infinity of the Divine Nature, should we admit a Real Diversity of it's Attributes or Propertys, it might, not impertinently, be queri'd] whether each of those Propertys singly contain'd such an Infinite Perfection? If it should be affirm'd, 'twould follow that an Absolutely Infinite consisted of Many Infinities in the Same Sence; If deny'd, 'twould follow that an Absolutely Infinite consisted of Finites. Both which appear to be equally Absurd.

That an Absolute Infinity is the Only Principle that can be suppos'd to infer such Simplicity is, I think, clear. For tho' the Argument that Some derive from the Perfection of God is sufficient to demonstrate that there's no Proper Composition in his Nature, yet it exclude's not All Diversity; since no Diversity can justly be reputed an Imperfection but such as is the Result of a Proper Composition.

This Opinion of the Absolute Simplicity of the Divine Nature, how Innocent soever it may appear, ha's been the Occasion of great Inconveniences. For hence *Spinoza* and Others have argu'd for the Necessity of the Divine Actions. Say they; The Nature of the Deity being Absolutely Simple his Decrees and Ideas can't but be the Same with his Essence. But his Essence is confessedly Necessary; therefore These must be so too. But if so, 'tis wel known how destructive to Religion the Consequences must be. And 'tis this which ha's inclin'd Some to confound the Duration of the Deity with his Essence, and from thence to infer that since his Essence is unextended or Simultaneous, therefore his Duration is so too: Thereby involving the Notion of the Eternal Being in Inextricable Difficultys.

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* See *De Vries Dissert. de Deo* p. 82.

3. Another Opinion by Some entertain'd as a Consequence of the Principle of an Absolute Infinity is that of *Absolute Omnipotence*. We have, I confess, observ'd the Patrons of the Divine Absolute Infinity, for the most part, to assert Omnipotence in a Somewhat Limited Sense by extending it only to such Acts as are judg'd to imply no Contradiction. But there are or have been Others who, considering the Nature of an Absolute Infinity, have conceiv'd it no less than Presumption and Impiety to limit and confine that Power in any sort in our Narrow Minds which is asserted to be Absolutely Infinite or Unlimited in it's Self. This induc't the Ingenious *Des Cartes* to assert that how manifest a Contradiction soever we may imagine a Thing to be, yet we ought not to affirm it's Impossible to God, forasmuch as Our Understandings being Finite, can't be pretended to be the Measures of His Infinite Power.

Which Method of Reasoning seem's to have greater Weight than is commonly allow'd it. For What is it less than an Abridging or Limiting the Divine Infinite Power to assert it can do nothing but what is agreeable and reconcileable to the Apprehensions of our Finite Minds? Since the Deity, as Absolutely Infinite, is suppos'd to be what is Entirely Inconceivable to any Created Intellect, ought we not, by consequence, to admit that he can do what is alike Inconceivable to the Understandings of his Creatures? 'Twas therefore it seem's, not without some Colour of Reason, *on these Principles*, that the Philosopher we just now Mention'd laid it down for his Opinion * That All Truths depended originally on the Will or Sovereign Determination of God, and that our Ideas are immediately wrought in us by Him conformably to this his Free Determination: Which, according to his Principles, was the Only Cause of the Truth of This Proposition, That the Three Angles of an Equilateral Triangle are Equal to One Right Angle; and that he might, had he so pleas'd

* See *Cart. Ep. 6. Part. 2.*

pleas'd, by his Absolutely Infinite Power, have caus'd the Contrary to be True, and have suited our Ideas to it in such a manner that we should as Clearly and Distinctly have Discern'd the Truth of That which we now call a Contradiction as we discern it's Falsity. Which Opinion laid a Foundation for the Belief of the Groffest Absurditys wherever the Divine Power is suppos'd to be Immediately concern'd.

4. Another Consequence of the Absolute Infinity of God is that of his *Absolute Omniscience*.

That the Deity Absolutely Foresee's All Events however Conditionate they may be in their Natures, and Necessarily Foreknows All the Actions ev'n of his Intelligent Creatures thō Free and Unconstrain'd in their Principles, are Paradoxes not likely to have been believ'd for their Own Sakes, and rather appear to have been entertain'd on the Credit of some other more Plausible Opinion. For sure no Wise or Good Man could be very forward to countenance Notions which (as commonly understood and asserted) seem so inconsistent both with the Justice of God and his Own Liberty, did he not conceive 'em to be the Necessary Consequences of some more Specious and Innocent Principle. That This Principle was originally no other than that of an Absolute Infinity wil, it's conceiv'd be sufficiently Clear from the Immediate Connection between these Opinions. For since that can't be Absolutely Infinite or Unbounded Knowledge which is not equally extended to All Future as wel as Past and Present Events; it follow's that if the Divine Knowledge be asserted to be thus Infinite, it must of necessity be understood to be thus extended.

With respect to this Universal Absolute Infallible Foreknowledge of the Deity 'tis the Observation of the late Excellent Mr. Boyl, * That the Greatest Wits that have labour'd to reconcile it with the Liberty of Man's Wil have been reduc't to maintain Something or other that thwart's

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* Discourse of Things above Reason p. 13, & 78.

Somr acknowledg'd Truth or Dictate of Reason.

From this Supposition of an Eternal Absolute and Universal Foreknowledge the Natural and Immediate Consequence was That of *Eternal Absolute Decrees of All Actions and Events as Future*. For since this appear's to have been the Opinion of *Plato*, it can't be pretended to have taken it's Original from such Expressions as are commonly thought to favour it in the New Testament. And as for the Old Testament (whatever the Opinion of Some of the less Ancient *Jews* might be) it yield's the least Colour in the World for such a Notion. But that it was admitted by *Plato* as a Consequence of his Doctrine of an Absolute Universal Foreknowledge seem's very clear from the Natural Connection between these two Opinions. For 'tis Selfevident (as we elsewhere observ'd) that Whatever is the Object of an Absolute Infallible Foreknowledge must be Somewhat that is Fixt and Determin'd. But whatever Event is Determin'd to Be, must plainly either be determin'd in it's Own Nature, or else it must be determin'd by virtue of Some Immutable Order of Things Independent on the Deity; or Lastly, it must be so determin'd by Some Particular Divine Decree. That it can't be so in it's Own Nature is clear. For nothing is more manifest than that Every Particular Event . in it's Self consider'd, is absolutely Indifferent either to Be or not Be. That it can't be thus determin'd by virtue of any Immutable Independent Order of Things, is alike clear. For 'tis not only Unaccountable how such an Immutable Order should establish it's Self without the Deity; but this would render the Creator of the World (like the *Jupiter* of the *Stoicks* and other Pagans) a very Insignificant Being, Incapable of any Free Action, and Unable to Foreknow any thing without consulting the Mysterious Book of *Fate*. It therefore remain's that as Nothing could be sufficient Eternally to determin the Existence of any Particular Event but Some Eternal Absolute Decree of that Sovereign Will on which All Things depend, so nothing less than such Eternal Decrees could be a Sufficient Foundation of such Eternal Uni-

Universal Infallible Foreknowledge as is usually attributed to the Deity.

But of the Eternity of the Divine Decrees we have discours'd in the Former Book. And as for the Opinion of the Universality and Absoluteness of those Decrees, tho' 'twas zealously asserted by St. *Austin* in his Dispute against *Pelagius*, yet 'twas rejected by Many of the Catholicks at that time; nor was it, either while he liv'd or afterwards, confirm'd by any Synod either of the Eastern or Western Church. And tho' 'twas indeed defended by the most Noted Writers of the Western Church in imitation of Him, yet 'twas much mollifi'd by Some in the Point of Reprobation or Prædestination to Eternal Punishment.

The Consequence of Universal Absolute Decrees was the Opinion of the *Universal Agency of God*. and the *Absolute Passiveness of the Creatures*; and (which appears to be but little better than the Same Opinion in Disguise) the Doctrine of *Universal Immediate Concourse*.

That not only such as are deservedly reputed Fanaticks or Enthusiasts, but Men of Learning and Sobriety have been Asserters of These Opinions there's none, I suppose, will deny who Know's the Former to have been the Doctrine of divers of the Schoolmen*; and that the Latter is still one Distinguishing Principle of Some who claim the Title of *Orthodox* for their Peculiar Character.

I confess the Absurdity and Impiety of the Former Opinion are so Undisguis'd and Barefac't that, at present, it find's little Entertainment with any but Such whose giddy Enthusiastick Minds render 'em both Incapable and Unworthy Dispute. But since the Latter has been so fortunate as to engage so many Learned Advocates in it's Defense, whose Pens, for so many Ages, have been employ'd in casting it's ill Features into Shades and representing it with an Air of Piety; 'twil perhaps be necessary to give That a few Thoughts.

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If

* These were wont to teach that 'twas not Fire that burnt, but that God burnt *ad Præsentiam Ignis*,

If we look into their Writings we shal find that as, in order to the establishing an Universal Absolute Foteknowledge, they assert Absolute Efficacious Decrees of All Actions and Events, so they suppose a Proportionable Influx of the Divine Power on All the Creatures, not only exciting 'em to act but Irresistibly Directing and Governing their several Actions in order to the fulfilling of those Decrees. They maintain that it's a Great Indignity and Affront to the Absolutely Infinite Deity to imagin him to be no more than either the Remote or the Partial Cause of All Action. They assert that he act's not only *wish* but *in* his Creatures, who are as Absolutely unable to Act of Themselves as they were either to Create or to Preserve Themselves. * But how all this is consistent with the Liberty of the Creatures must, I think, be own'd to be Absolutely Incomprehensible.

Nor is it, I conceive, sufficient to say that God influences and actuate's the Creatures in a Manner agreeable to their respective Natures, viz, Necessary Agents Necessarily, but Free Agents in a way perfective of their Liberty. For this is to say what they can never explain nor reconcile in any tolerable degree with their Own Principles. For such an Irresistible Force, or *Influx* (as they choose to call it) seem's Absolutely to subvert the Distinction of Necessary and Free with regard to the Creatures, to reduce All to the Same Level, and to leave no imaginable Difference, with respect to the Event, between the Action of an Angel and that of a Brute or Clock.

Nor is it, perhaps, to better purpose to affirm that God effect's only the *Matter* and not the *Form* of Sinful Actions. For neither is This easily reconcileable to their Principles. For if he effect's only the Matter or Physical Part of the Act, then the Form or Moral Part is, by consequence, entirely the Effect of the Creature's Power. But if so, then there is no Proper Concurse with respect to That. Then the Creature in Some Cases direct's the Action, and God is not so much as a Partial Cause of such Direction.
For

* *Vide Turret: in Cap. de Providentia &c.*

For Instance; a Person is guilty of Hatred to his Father. In This, Two Things are to be distinguisht; viz, the *Matter* of the Act, or Hatred in General, which is neither Good nor Evil but Indifferent; and the *Form*, or the Direction or Particular Determination of that Hatred to an Unlawful Object. Now if it be said that God effects only the *Matter* of the Act or Hatred in General without any Determination to any Particular Object, then it must indeed be confest that here's a Proper *Concurse*; but then God can't be any more than the Partial Cause of this Action. For the Direction of that Hatred towards Such a Particular Object (to which he doesn't concur) is most certainly Something Positive, and deserv's the name of an Act too. But if they say (as according to Their Principles which make the Deity the Total Cause of All Action, they are bound to do) that God not only effects the Action of Hatred but irresistibly govern's and direct's it; then it seem's to be absolutely Inconceivable both how there should be either any Proper Concurse or Liberty of the Creature in That Action, and how God should not be the Author of the Evil, since he is affirm'd to be the Total Cause of the Action.

Nor can it be to better purpose to seek refuge in their usual Distinctions of *Necessity*. For if the Necessity resulting from the Decree and Influence of the Almighty be Absolute and Irresistible; 'tis, we humbly conceive, but little odds whether it be call'd a Necessity of *Coaction* or of *Immutability*.

And whereas in Justification of those Opinions 'tis pretended that the ascribing such a Selfdetermining Power to a Creature would render it Independent on the Creator; 'tis humbly conceiv'd we sufficiently secure the Dependence of Rational Agents on the First and Supreme Cause if we assert that as they at first deriv'd their Power from Him, so they stil owe to Him the Preservation of it, and are continually liable to his Interposition and Influence when he think's fit.

Nor is such a Power of Determining our Actions in any respect inconsistent with the Divine Sustainment.

For This ha's a reference only to the Preservation of our Beings and of such Powers as we possess; and is very different from an Universal Immediate Concourse, which refer's to the Excitation, Government and Direction of those Powers in All our Actions. And as the Deity sustain's our Beings without any Confusion of Substance, so he may very wel be suppos'd to sustain such Powers as belong to our Beings without having any Part in the Actions which proceed from 'em.

And certainly it appear's to be much more for the honour of the Great Creator to suppose that he ha's produc't Creatures capable of thus determining their Actions, than Machins incapable of effecting any thing without being first mov'd and acted themselves. As he who shal have contriv'd a Watch or a Clock which, by means of the Spring and Wheels within it's Self, point's at the Hours, must be own'd to have given a Greater Proof of his Skil than he who ha's made a Cart or a Plough which can do nothing unless dragg'd by a continu'd Application of External Force.

5. As the Opinion of an Absolute Infinity ha's tempted Some to assert God's *doing* All Things, so it ha's given Occasion to Others to hold his *being* All Things.

'Tis sufficiently known to have been and stil to be the Perswasion of Many that God is *the All or the Entire Universe*, and that Particular Beings are but so many different Modifications of his Essence!

This was the Assertion of *Spinoza*; who by attempting to prove that Every Thing is God ha's in effect deny'd that there's any God at all.

That which first tempted him to undertake his pretended Demonstration of Atheism appear's to have been no other than the Cartesian Principles *That Matter and Extension are the Same*, and *That Matter is in it's very Nature Infinite*. For These being once admitted, he thought it not Impossible in the First place to perswade the World that Infinite Matter could not but belong to the Divine or Necessarily-existent Nature. For thus he affirm's *Substantiam Corpoream, quæ non nisi Infinita concipi potest, nullâ ratione*

ratione Naturâ Divinâ indignam esse dici posse. i: e: That Bodily (or Material) Substance, which can no otherwise be conceiv'd than as Infinite, can in no respect be said to be unworthy the Divine Nature. His next step was to prove that his Deity was the All, or that it included not only Matter but All Being in it's Self. Thus in his Explication of his Sixth Definition say's he, *Quod Absolutè Infinitum est ad ejus Essentiam pertinet quicquid Essentiam exprimit et Negationem nullam involvit.* i: e: That Being which is Absolutely Infinite comprehend's in it's Own Essence whatever is Positive or expressive of Essence.

And his Followers are us'd to argue to this effect. An Absolutely Infinite Nature can't but include and Properly and Formally possess All Being, or must needs be the Universal Substance. For wherever there is any Being or Substance which is no Part of it, there it must of necessity be bounded, and consequently it can't on that Supposition be allow'd to be that Absolutely Infinite Nature which we conceive to exist. There is then, say they, either no Absolutely Infinite Nature, or else it must Formally include whatever is Real and Substantial.

Which Method of arguing wil possibly be found more couclusive than Some are willing to apprehend. And whoever undertake's to confute it wil have perhaps as much difficulty to make appear how there can be Anôther Being or Substance distinct from That which is suppos'd to be Absolutely Infinite (with an Infinity of Fulness as wel as of Immensity as Dr. Clarke and others express it) as how there can be Anôther Matter distinct from an Absolutely Infinite Matter. For as 'tis undeniable that an Absolutely Infinite Matter (if existent) must be All Matter, so 'tis perhaps impossible to apprehend how an Absolutely Infinite Substance (if any such) should be any other than All Being or a Being which formally include's All Reality, All Entity in it's Self. As a Being which is suppos'd to be Positively Infinite only with respect to Extent (such as Matter by some *Cartesians* is imagin'd to be) must necessarily be conceiv'd to exclude any Other Extension of the Same Nature; so it seem's

clear that a Being which is Positively or Absolutely Infinite in All Respects (such as the Deity is usually asserted to be) must needs be allow'd (as containing whatever is Positive or expressive of Perfection) to exclude Any Other Being whatever; since to suppose Any Other Being to exist besides that Absolutely Infinite Being, is to suppose him not to be Absolutely Infinite in those respects wherein the Nature of that Other Being is conceiv'd to agree with His.

These 'tis humbly conceiv'd, have been Some of the Ill Consequences of this Opinion of an Absolute Infinity with reference to the Deity consider'd in Himself. We shal conclude with such as have a reference more especially to Us. These appear to have been.

1. It's discouraging Enquirys into his *Nature*.

2. It's raising Prejudices against his *Existence*.

1. It appear's to have had this Ill Effect, that is ha's in a very great Degree discourag'd Enquirys into the *Nature* and Perfections of God

As God is the Object of Religion, so Religion can have no other Solid Foundation but a Rational Apprehension of the Divine Nature. It must needs be a Vain Thing to inform a Man of Reason that he ought to Be'lieve in an **Eternal, Omnipresent, and Omnipotent Being**, the Creator and Governor of All Things, unless he be first instructed in the Grounds of that Belief, and assur'd of the Consistence of those Ideas. To discourse of the Nature of Virtue and Vice, or of the Punishments and Rewards of a Future State, whatever Impression it may make on Weak and Timorous Spirits, wil have none at all upon Manly and Generous Minds till they are first convinc'd that there is indeed a Being, who by right of Creation, ha's an Absolute Authority to Govern and Dispose of us, and who not only tak'ts notice of our Actions, but wil render to every man according to his Deeds. Without such a Previous Conviction as This, the most Artificial and Pathetical Discourse wil seem Cant and Enthusiasm to Such Persons, and wil prove in effect but Declaiming to the Winds.

Now it's an Indisputable Principle, That if there be a most Wise and Beneficent Being who Created and Govern's

Govern's the World, he either created such Beings as were capable of a sufficient Knowledge of Himself, or else he never design'd to suspend their Happiness on That Obedience which, without such a Competent Knowledge, was either not likely to be perform'd or, if perform'd, could have nothing to recommend it to his Acceptance. For to Believe and to Practise without Sufficient Conviction is no Virtue but a Shame and Disparagement to any Capable Being.

But if such a Knowledge of God be Necessary, if it be Attainable; 'tis an evident Consequence that Whatever Opinion render's his Idea Impossible in it's Self, and by baffling the Enquiries of so many Ages, ha's prov'd the Occasion of so great Discouragement to further Attempts, can't be the Genuin Conception of his Nature, but is equally Groundless and Pernicious.

This, 'tis humbly conceiv'd, ha's been the Case of the Opinion of an Absolute Infinity. For from hence Many are apt to say, with *Philaethes* in *Mr. Guildon's Manual*, * *Supposing the Existence of a First Cause, of what Import would it be to Us, unless we were better acquainted with his Divine and Infinite Nature than consist's with a Being so Finite as Man, which can never comprehend an Infinite? And if we can't comprehend his Nature, neither can we comprehend his Will &c.*

Yet this Reasoning can by no means affect the Doctrine of the Divine Eternity (as some wil possibly object.) For as the Existence of an Eternal Being is one of the most Evident Truths in Nature) so the Difficultys which it incide's (tho in some respects above our Comprehension yet) admit of an Hypothesis sufficient it's conceiv'd, to yield Satisfaction to All sober and Ingenuous Minds. To make this appear wil be the Design of the Third Part of this Enquiry.

2. The Opinion of an Absolute Infinity ha's been the Great Occasion of Prejudice against the *Existence* of God. Tho men of Atheistick Principles have not always deny'd

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* *Deist's Manual* p: 51.

the Existence of an Absolutely Infinite Being, but were, for ought with any Certainty appear's, the very First Assertors of it; yet their suppos'd Infinity (which was no other then that of Matter and Space) was evidently of such a Nature as excluded those Consequences which have since been drawn from the Opinion of the Divine Absolute Infinity, and which have prov'd the Occasion of so much Scandal to People of That Character. But notwithstanding This, and notwithstanding what the *Spinofists* have since held, 'tis notorious that Many have deny'd the Possibility of a *Being Absolutely Infinite in All Perfections*. For what Objection ha's been more frequent in the Mouthes of Infidels and Libertins then This, That the Attributes of *Infinite Power, Knowledge &c*, as commonly ascrib'd to the Deity, signifie no Idea or Conception of men's Minds, but are only Expressions of their Ignorant Admiration and Astonishment; and consequently, That the Deity is nothing in effect but a Complication of Highsounding Words without the least Signification or Reality? *

For the Satisfaction of the Curious we shan't think it a Trouble to transcribe *Vanini's* Description of God in his *Amphitheatrum Providentiæ Divinæ*, wherein he sum's up All the foremention'd Consequences of the Opinion of the Divine Absolute Infinity with design, as it seem's, to prejudice men against the Existence of a Divine Being. This *Vanini* is known to have di'd a Martyr for the Cause of Atheism, being burnt at *Ithouluse*, and this his Description may wel be reputed as an Abstract of his Reasons for his Infidelity. Say's he, *Deus est sui ipsius et Principium et Finis; utriusque carens, neutrius egens, utriusque Parens atque Autor. Semper est sine Tempore, cui Præteritum non abit nec subit Futurum. Regnat ubique sine Loco; Immobiles absque Statu; Pernix sine Motu; extra Omnia Omnis; intra Omnia, sed non includitur in Iphis; extra Omnia, sed non ab ipsis excluditur. Bonus sine Qualitate, sine Quantitate Magnus, Torus sine Partibus. Immutabilis cum cætera mutat.*
Cujus

* See Dr. Cudw: *Intell: Syst.* p. 640. 641. & 652, 653.

Cujus Velle Potentia , cui Opus Voluntas. Simplex est in quo nihil in Potentiâ , sed in Actu Omnia ; imo Ipse Purus , Primus , et Ultimus Actus. Denique , est Omnia , super Omnia , extra Omnia , intra Omnia , præter Omnia , ante Omnia , et post Omnia Omnis. „ That is, (to make it speak as good English „ as 'twil bear) God is both the Beginning and End of his „ Own Existence; or wanting Either without being Indigent „ of Either he is [yet] the Cause and Author of Both. He „ Is Always without Time, without any Vicissitude of „ Past and Future. He reign's Every Where without „ Place; is Immoveable without Station, Swift without „ Motion. He is Whole Without the Universe, and „ yet Not excluded; Whole Within it, and yet Not „ included. Good without Quality; Great without „ Quantity; Whole without Parts; Unchangeable tho „ Author of Change in Other Beings. Whose Wil is „ not only his Power but his very Work. He is so „ Simple that in Him Nothing is in a State of Possibility „ but Every Thing in Act; being Himself the Only „ Pure, First, Middle, and Last Act. To conclude, he „ is All Things, Above All Things, Without All Things, „ Within All Things, Besides All Things, Before All „ Things, and After All Things.

PART THE THIRD

O F

E T E R N I T Y.

FROM the First Philosophers recorded in History down to the Age of *Plato*, it appear's that Such as concern'd themselves with Speculations of this nature were us'd, for the most part, to conceive Eternity under the Notion of *Succession*. This indeed was the most Natural and Obvious Conception, and the most Agreeable to the Infancy of Philosophy. Those Ruder Reasoners, considering that the Life of Man consisted of a Series or Succession of Days and Months and Years, and was (as it were) measur'd out by the Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodys, were easily induc't to conceive the like of the Eternal Being.

But when the Wits of Men began to be more Refin'd and Metaphysical, Another Hypothesis soon became Fashionable. For *Plato* and a few of his Predecessors, having adopted *Anaxagoras's* Notion of an Absolutely Infinite Deity, thought themselves oblig'd, by consequence to assert an *Unsuccessive Simultaneous Eternity*. For since the Opinion of the Divine Absolute Simplicity (which we have observ'd to be one of the Consequences of That Principle) require's that Nothing be affirm'd to belong to the Deity which is not the Deity himself; they therefore conceiv'd it necessary (as we before observ'd) to assert the Identity of the Duration and Essence of the Eternal Being. And, inasmuch as they had concluded the Essence of God to be Absolutely Simple they infer'd his Duration to be so too.

This Opinion of a Simultaneous Eternity, being conceiv'd to have so Necessary a Connection with that of an Absolute Infinity,

Infinity, ha's always been an Attendent on it. Thus it ha's been propagated from the Time of *Plato* through the Times of the *Schools* ev'n til the Reformation; when Some having rejected the Doctrine of an Absolute Infinity, exchange'd this Notion of a Simultaneous Eternity for the more Ancient Opinion of a Successive one.

'Tis between these Two Opinions that the Present Age is divided. But if we consider and judge impartially, perhaps, Neither will be found to be defensible. For,

1. As to the *Unsuccessive Simultaneous* Eternity of *Plato*. What can be more Extravagant and Desperate than to assert that the Duration of Innumerable Ages is Actually sum'd up and comprehended in a Single Indivisible Moment! That Eternity, which is more than Equivalent to All the Periods and Vicissitudes of Time, is it's Self an Instant! That the Deity, who Created the World near 6000. Years ago, is stil pronouncing the Almighty *Fiat*; and that, tho' All Things yet remain as they were from the Beginning, he ha's actually Kindl'd the Universal Conflagration! And not only so, but that he destroy'd the World the very moment wherein he created it, and yet ha's been and is Eternally both Creating and Destroying it!

'Tis, I confess, a Subject which ha's exhausted the Leisure and Subtily of the Schools to Explain the Nature of the Imaginary Simultaneous Duration of the Eternal Being, and the Manner of it's Coëxistence with that of Successive Beings. But how *Subtile* and *Profound* soever they may have been on this Point, I perswade my self their Attempt ha's been as fruitless as that of Squaring the Circle: And the Voluminous Labours of those Great Matters of Quibbling and Sophistry have in the Issue been no less Ridiculous than the Birth of the Mountains. But.

2. As for the Other Notion, of a *Successive* Eternity; Is that in any Degree more Intelligible than the Former Opinion? What Sence can we possibly make of a Succession without Beginning? Can there have been a Second or Fifth or Tenth without a First? Besides, Is it Possible a Really Successive Duration should be actually Infinite? Can That Number to which New Additions both are and

and will be made for Ever, be at any time so Great as not to admit of Increase by those Additions? May we not as easily conceive a Man gradually to arrive at Old Age without passing through Infancy and Childhood, or a Racer to reach the Goal without Starting, as a Succession without Beginning? And may we not as well suppose an Actually Infinite Growing Line, or a Cube or Triangle without Sides or Dimensions, as an Actually Infinite and yet Ever Increasing Succession or Number?

But if Neither of the Vulgar Methods be Defensible, it follow's that either we must be content stil to speak Contradictions about it, or must look out for some Better or more Consistent Hypothesis.

To which End it may not be amiss first to consider the Nature of Duration and Time. For having once got a True Notion of These we shall thereby the more easily be instructed to form some Conception of Eternity.

Duration and Time are Both of 'em Ideas of our Minds resulting from our Consideration of the Existence of Beings with reference either to a Real or an Imaginary Succession. Yet in This they are made to differ; that whereas Duration is usually (tho perhaps erroneously) said to be a Necessary Appendage of All Beings, Time is only conceiv'd to agree to Creatures, or Beings whose Existence is purely Contingent. Time therefore in it's usual Acceptation import's Contingence; and may, perhaps. not unfitly be exprest by *Contingent Existence*.

This then being the Proper Notion of *Time*. and Time, being oppos'd to Eternity, it follow's that as Time (or Temporal Existence) is Contingent Existence (or That Particular Sort of Existence which agree's to Creatures, as distinguish'd from That which is Peculiar to the Deity;) so Eternal Existence, or *Eternity* in the full Latitude of the Word, is no otherwise to be consider'd than as *Necessary Existence*.

If we Keep to This Notion of Eternity, as we shal have the most Proper and Genuine Conception of it, so we shal easily disengage our selves from the Perplexitys which unavoidably spring from our conceiving it entirely under
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the Notion of *Duration*. For I believe whoever consider's the Nature of the Idea of Duration, and how impossible it is in any case to separate it from the Ideas of Succession, Parts, and Beginning (as the Schools in vain attempted to do) wil soon be sensible that our conceiving Eternity under That Notion ha's been the Original of most of the Difficultys which usually pose and perplex our Minds. Whereas, on the contrary, the Idea of *Necessary Ekistence* wil be so far from raising Difficultys in our Conception of Eternity that it wil, in a great measure, prevent 'em. For being us'd to think of the Deity as of a Being that Necessarily Is, as this wil sufficiently distinguish him from All Other Beings, so 'twil dispose us to receive Ideas of him very different from those of his Creatures. And since This Conception of Eternity neither admit's the Ideas of *Finite* nor *Infinite*, neither necessarily include's any Real Succession nor yet absolutely exclude's it; 'twil perhaps not only prevent such Difficultys as were apt to arise in our Minds from the Vulgar Idea, but wil admit of a Rational and Satisfactory Hypothesis with respect to the Thing it's Self.

It ha's already been observ'd that the Methods which have hitherto been us'd in conceiving Eternity, either as Entirely *Successive* or *Unsuccessive*, are attended with Inextricable Difficultys. The Former, because it suppose's a Continual Addition without either Beginning or Increase The Latter, because it suppose's an *Instant* not only commensurate to All the Periods and Vicissitudes of Time, but ev'n of such a Latitude as absolutely to exclude the Possibility of the least Addition. Let us therefore in the next place, consider whether any *Medium* can be discover'd between these Two Extremes.

To which End we may recall to mind Two Principles already establisht in the Former Book.

The First is, That the Eternal Being is a Perfectly Free Agent.

The Second is. That the Supposition of Particular Eternal Decrees is Inconsistent with our Notion of the Perfect Liberty and Absolute Independence of God.

From

From these Principles 'tis humbly conceiv'd, it may not be unreasonable to conclude,

That tho' the Eternal Being had no Necessary Succession in his Own Nature, yet being Perfectly Selfactive and Free, thence it proceeded that the Exercise of his Freedom in Decreeing and Producing the Creatures, in such Manner and Order as was judg'd Fit by his most Perfect Wisdom, became the Original of whatever Real Succession ha's been in Nature: And such Succession as we are apt to conceive to have preceded is no other than Imaginary.

Against which Account I can think of no Objection but what wil admit of a Satisfactory Solution As,

1. If it be argu'd that to suppose the Decrees and Production of the Particular Creatures to have been the Original of Succession and neither of 'em to have been Eternal is Inconsistent with the Notion of an Eternal Intelligent Deity, inasmuch as we experience that Perception and Thought include Succession; I conceive it may be reply'd.

That the Reason why Perception and Thought are joyn'd with Succession in our Selves is purely Accidental; proceeding either from the Imperfection of our Natures, or from the Peculiarity of our State and Circumstances.

1. One Reason is the Imperfection of our Natures. Our Minds are Naturally in a manner Empty and Unfurnisht of Ideas. We are Originally, in a great degree, Ignorant ev'n of our Selves. So that in order to an Acquaintance with our Own Natures we are oblig'd to proceed by Steps, and to make use of a Train or Succession of Ideas as we can acquire 'em. Whereas, on the contrary we have already observ'd that a Perfect Selfconsciousness is an Essential Property of the Eternal Being.

2. The Peculiarity of our Circumstances is Another Cause of our Successive Perception and Thought. We find our selves beset on all sides with a Great Variety of Objects, which are continually making Impressions on our Senses. But these Impressions can't be distinctly attended

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to, view'd, and compar'd by us without a Succession of Ideas. But the Case of the Eternal Being was widely different For 'tis humbly conceiv'd we have already prov'd it an Injurious Supposition to imagin him to have had any Other Particular Necessary Object of his Perception but Himself.

From both these Considerations 'tis, I take it, sufficiently clear that the Deity might very wel be an Intelligent Being without any such Succession of Ideas as we experience in our Selves. For Perception or Intelligence do'n't necessarily include Succession; but if it be Successive 'tis only by Accident, and only to be suppos'd in the Cases we just now mention'd.

The Essential Perception of the Eternal Being is therefore, it seem's, no otherwise to be conceiv'd than as his Complacential Consciousness of his Own most Perfect Nature and as terminated on None but Himself. For that it Ever had the least reference to any Other Particular Being proceeded entirely from his Free Determination.

'Tis to be confest that the Idea of Succession so insinuate's it's self into our Idea of Existence that we find it almost Impossible to conceive the Eternal Existence of God any otherwise than as an Eternal Continu'd Series or Succession. But Imagination, as was elsewhere observ'd, ought not to be heard in contradiction to the Verdict of Reason. And there need's but a little Attention to discover the Original of this Notion of an Eternal Succession. Which wil appear to be no Reality but to proceed from the Same Errour of Imagination that incline's us to conceive Extension as Absolutely Infinite. For since we immediatly converse with almost nothing but what include's both Succession and Extension in it's Idea, thence it happen's that our Imaginations are so fill'd with these Two Notions that we find our selves equally unable to conceive any End of the One or Beginning of the Other. Just as a Mole can conceive the Universe no other wise than as a Heap of Earth, having no other Idea whereby to represent it.

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2. Some wil possibly object, that if there was *once* no Real Succession in Nature, 'twil follow that the Divine Existence was *then* at least (as it's usually said to be) *Instantaneous*.

But to this it may be reply'd; That Existence is nothing if distinguish'd from the Being which exist's. Consequently, there can no Real Quantity belong to it as so distinguish'd. Wherefore it can't properly be denominated either Finite or Infinite, Successive or Instantaneous. For these are Attributes which have a reference to Quantity, and can no more agree to Existence, which is but a Mode of Beings than they can to Necessity or Contingence, which are Modes of Existence. To define Eternity (or Necessary Existence) by Infinity or the Negation of Limits seem's to be no less Impertinent than to define Virtue by the Negation of Red or Blue. For Existence (which hath no Quantity or Dimensions) hath no more Analogy to Extension and Limits than Virtue (which hath no Colour) hath to Red or Blue. And for the Same Reason, 'tis no less Improper to define it to be Instantaneous; since ev'n an Instant (as likewise an Atom) is conceiv'd as Quantity, tho' the Minute'st imaginable. But if it can't properly be denominated Instantaneous, much less can it be Successive.

3. Lastly Some may yet object that, admitting the Necessary Being not to have been Eternally the Subject of any Real Succession, 'twil follow that he could never have become so in consistence with his Immutability.

To this I reply; That no sufficient Reason can be given why such Change as is the Consequence of the Exercise of Liberty should be judg'd Injurious to the Perfection of the Divine Nature. On the Contrary, 'tis evident that to be absolutely Incapable of such Change as is included in the Free Determination of Action is the Greatest of Imperfections.

If it be said that the Eternal Being is necessarily what he is, and consequently must be absolutely Incapable of Change I freely grant it to be the Indisputable Prerogative of that
Ado-

Adorable Being to be Incapable of Change with reference to his *Nature* or *Essence* (which I take it is the Only Unchangeableness or Necessity that's consistent with his Perfection) and thence I conclude that he's Necessarily or Unchangeably a Free Agent. But if Freedom, or an Independent Power of Selfdetermination, be a Necessary or Essential Perfection of God, it's Exercise can be no Imperfection. Either These or the Like Considerations oblig'd Some of the Schoolmen and, after them, *Clara* in his fourth Problem to conclude that *Deus potest velle aliquid Novum sine Mutatione sui*; i: e: The Deity may Decree a New Thing without any Change injurious to the Perfection of his Nature.

FINIS.



TWO DISCOURSES
CONCERNING
THE
NATURE OF SPACE
AND
DURATION.

I. *Of Space.*

A COMPETENT Knowledge of the Nature of Space and Duration being of Absolute Necessity to the more perfect understanding of what has been advanc'd concerning the Attributes of Imensity and Eternity; I shal here subjoyn what appears most reasonable to be said on Both these Subjects.

Tho I am satisfi'd that the Words *Space*, *Extension*, *Amplitude*, and *Expansion* are nothing different, neither in their Genuin Signification nor in their Original Use, and that whatever Distinction is wont to be assign'd is merely Arbitrary; yet, to avoid Confusion, I shal here, for the most part, use the word *Extension* with reference to *Matter* or *Body*; and the Other Terms shal be us'd to signifie what I humbly conceive to be *Immaterial*. For that there's a Real Space or Expansion Distinct from Matter may appear from what will be said.

Distance is a Relative Idea of Space and Extension consider'd as a Line between Two Separate Points. For tho the

the Ideas of Space and Extension can't be form'd without that of Distance, yet they are never call'd Distance but with an Immediate Reference to Two such Points.

As the Idea of Distance is in reality nothing different from those of Space and Extension consider'd with Relation to Two Separate Points; so that of *Figure* is no other than either of those Ideas consider'd with Reference to Three or More Points whether Real or Imaginary.

Hence it appear's that the Ideas of Space and Extension are Absolute, but those of Distance and Figure are Relative and Modal.

As Nothing is so easily conceiv'd as Space and Extension in the General, so Nothing is so difficultly express'd. Which is a further Evidence of the Absoluteness and Simplicity of their General Nature. For tho' such Notions as are compos'd of Different Ideas (as are All Relations) will admit of a Description by Words, yet where there's no such Composition of Ideas there can be no such Description: Since Different Words, being the Signs of Different Ideas, can't joyn'tly express a Notion void of all Real Difference or Variety.

That the General Notions of Space and Extension are of so Simple and Absolute a Nature as to admit of no Proper Description by Words, wil evidently appear by considering the reputed Descriptions which are usually giv'n: Which we shal find to be no better in effect than Identical, and to edify no more than if we should say, Space is Space, Extension is Extension. Thus if we either say they are Length, or Breadth, or Depth, or All these together, yet These are evidently but different words for Space and Extension diversly consider'd. And supposing we knew not what Space and Extension were before, we might with as much reason enquire What Length or Breadth or Depth are. Or if, as usual, we define Extension to be That which ha's *partes extra partes*, or Parts beyond each other, yet since no Extension can consist of Unextended Parts, t'is in effect no more than to say that Extension consist's of Extensions A Description

cription that look's rather like Banter than Instruction.

There's scarce any thing in Nature whose Particular Contemplation is attended with greater Difficultys than those of Extension and Space. For here we have not only the Proper Abstrusity of the Things themselves, but the Defects and Misreports of our Facultys to encounter: Which, for the most part, we find almost as difficult to discover and confess as to rectifie.

If we impartially reflect, we shall, perhaps, observe Three Grand Prejudices by which we are apt to be perplext and misled in these Enquirys.

1. Since our External Senses every where receive the Idea of Extension, thence it proceed's that as we can see no Limits to it in our Imaginations, so we are Strongly dispos'd to conclude that it's Absolutely Infinite or Unlimited in it's Self,

2. Because we immediately converse with nothing but Matter or Bodys, thence it happen's that we are apt to conclude there's no Real Space or Expansion distinct from the Extension of Matter.

3. Consequently, Since we can't but see great reason to believe the Existence of Somewhat that's Immaterial and therefore (as we are inclin'd to suppose) without Dimensions, thence we are easily perswaded that Space and Extension are merely Accidental to Being in General, and that *Substance* is a more Recluse and Hidden Thing equally Remote from our Senses and Conceptions.

The First of these Prejudices ha's, 'tis humbly conceiv'd been sufficiently detected in B: 2. Ch. 2. I shal here only remark a few things with reference to the Two Last.

The Possibility and Reality of a Space Specifically distinct from Matter has been so fully demonstrated by Sr *Isaac Newton*, Mr. *Locke*, Dr *Bentley*, and Others of the First Rank for Learning that it may seem wholly Superfluous to say any thing in so Clear a Case. But that I may not be suspected to suppose any Principle without sufficient Proof something shal be added on that Head.

1. As to the *Possibility*. That a Space or Expansion distinct from Matter or Body must be reputed Possible is clear

clear from the very Notion of *Matter*; which is not Simple but comprehend's Several Ideas, such as Expansion, Mobility, and Divisibility. Between These (tho' All necessary to the Notion of Matter, and especially the First, which may be reputed the Foundation of All it's Properties) there appear's to be no Absolutely Necessary Connection in the Nature of Things: But an Expansion may, for ought we Know, exist without either Mobility or Real Divisibility. If then we can see no Repugnance in the Notion of an Immoveable and Indivisible Expansion, it follow's that an Immaterial Expansion, or a Space void of Body must be allow'd (at least as far as We are capable of Judging) to be a Possibility.

2. As to the *Reality* or Actual Existence of an Immaterial Expansion or Space. This, 'tis humbly conceiv'd, is most clear with reference to the Spaces between the Heavenly Bodys. That those Wide Spaces contain but a very Inconsiderable Portion of Matter (and That without any Vortical Motion as *Des Cartes* dreamt) may be concluded from the Free Passage which they give to the Tails of Comets; tho' these move in Planes at all imaginable Angles of Inclination with one another and with that of the Ecliptick, and are compos'd of Vapours so thin and dissippable as to admit the Rays of the Fixt Stars quite thorough their entire Column, tho' usually (as hath been calculated) of above 400000 Miles Diametre.

And that ev'n the Grosest and the Firmest Bodys of our Earth (such as Steel and Adamant) have their Vacuities or Spaces void of Matter, may be concluded from the following Reflections.

That such Bodys have their Pores is undeniable. Now, these Pores must be either entirely void of Matter or else furnisht with some such Subtile Matter as the *Cartesians* suppose. But admitting such a Subtile Matter, admitting too that it ha's no Pores of it's Own and is by consequence most nicely qualifi'd to fill up the Pores of the Grosest Bodys, yet it may be enquir'd whence it is that 'tis more Subtile than the Steel or Adamant which we suppose to contain it, seeing it's Particles are much more closely compacted

packed and wedg'd together? If it be said that it's Subtility is the Result of the Motion of it's Particles; How is such a Motion Possible when the Particles are suppos'd to be so Compacted and Contiguous that there's not the least Interval into which the Particles situate in the Extremitys may Retreat? If it be reply'd that those Particles aren't confin'd or pent in by the Superficies of the Steel or Adamant, but have a Communication by Motion with Others of the Same Kind situate Without; yet this is only to shift the Scene, not to remove the Difficulty: Since the World is by Them conceiv'd to be Infinite and to be every where alike full of Matter. If they have recourse to their Last Refuge and, with *Des Cartes*, inform us that this Motion of the Subtile Matter is Circular, each Particle succeeding in the other's place so closely that not the least *Hiatus* or Vacuity can intervene; this seem's to be the most Extravagant Supposition in the World. For how can a Body moving in a Streight Line determin Another Body to move in a Circle? Besides, Whatever Figure they please to give to those Suhtile Particles, (except they suppose 'em to be Angular, which yet would be a very Unfit Figure for such a Circular Motion) they must suppose some Other Particles of Different Figures to fill up the Spaces between 'em. But this will put 'em upon a Greater Difficulty, viz, to conceive how any Particular Round or Wheel of Particles should so swiftly drag those Others of a Different Make without rubbing against the Neighbouring Wheels and moving the Whole Mass of Matter at once, Which Inconvenience, if not wel provided against, would expose the Material Universe to the Utmost Confusion npon the Motion of the most Inconsiderable Gnat or Fly.

A farther Proof of the Actual Existence of a Space void of Matter may be deriv'd from the Nature of Gravitation. If there is no Portion of Matter either Absolutely Light or Less Heavy in it's Own Nature (as the *Aristotelians* and Others have without sufficient Reason suppos'd) but Every Particle gravitate's in a just Proportion to it's Real Bulk (as is now generally agree'd;) then it follow's that Every Greater Portion of Matter must gravitate in a just Proportion

tion to the Number and Size of the Particles which compose it. From which Principles it's manifest that no sufficient Reason can be giv'n why any Two Bodys of Equal Superficies should gravitate differently but only This, viz. That the One ha's either More or Greater Pores and contain's Less Matter than the Other.

But if the Groffer and more Compact Bodys have their Pores or Intervals which contain Nothing that's Material, how much Greater Intervals must we suppose in the Water and the Atmosphere which surround our Earth?

Yet that these Intervals (tho' they contain nothing that's Material) are not absolutely Empty is manifest. For it ha's all the Evidence of a First Principle That a mere Nothing can't be the Foundation of Distance, or That Two Bodys between which there's no Real Space or Expansion must of Necessity Coalesce and Unite.

And that this Expansion which is so necessary to be suppos'd as the Foundation of the Distance between the Parts of Matter, is not only Something but a very Great Reality, is no Less certain. For it's Expansion which we are assur'd is the Greatest Reality that belong's to the Nature of Matter, as being the Foundation of All it's Propertys. And 'tis That which (under the Name of *Extension*) is by Some Philosophers asserted to be the very Essence of Matter. And certainly theres no Sufficient Reason to imagin that the Expansion or Extension of Matter, which is cloath'd with those Imperfect Propertys of *Divisibility*, *Mobility* &c. should be either a Greater, or ev'n so Great, a Reality as That Immaterial Expansion which, without those Imperfections, pervade's and contain's it.

For that the Immaterial Expansion not only Replenishe's the Pores or Intervals but ev'n Pervade's and Penetrate's the Parts of Matter appear's from hence, That it giv's no Hindrance to the Motion of Matter, and is neither increast nor diminisht by it's Access or Recess: Than which there can be no surer Proofs of a Penetration.

This Hypothesis of an Immaterial Expansion which pervade's and replenishe's the Material Universe, as it's the most Natural so it's the most Ancient Method of Philosophy.

sophy. For it appear's to have been the Opinion of the Ancient *Egyptians*, and Others, and to have prevail'd among the Learned long before *Democritus* and *Epicurus* debauch't it to serve the Ends of Atheism. To which it's so far from being really subservient that, by so firmly establishing Two Different Sorts of Extension or Expansion (or *Two Distinct Substances*) it appear's to be best suited to destroy the most Plausible Hypothesis of Atheism (I mean That of *Spinoza*) which is built on the Principles of an Absolute Material *Plenum* and *One Substance*.

But Some wil here enquire, What is this Immaterial Expansion, or what Rank do's it Hold among the other Beings of the Universe? As to this there are Two Opinions.

1. Some are inclin'd to think it a Peculiar Sort of Being (distinct both from *Matter* and *Spirit*.) This was the Opinion of the *Epicureans*, and ha's since been adopted by divers Great Men of the Present Age. But, with submission, this Opinion seem's justly chargeable with the fault of multiplying Beings without necessity. And tho' 'twas consistent enough with the Principles of an *Epicurean*, who in effect deny'd a Deity, yet it less suit's the Faith of a *Christian*, who believ's in an *Eternal Omnipresent Spirit in whom we all live, move, and have our Being*. Wherefore.

2. They seem to speak both more like Philosophers and Christians, as well as more agreeably to the Sense of the Ancients, who think it the Peculiar Prerogative of the Deity to Pervade and Comprehend as well as to Sustain the Universe. For that the Deity Sustain's the Entire Systeme of Things, and Sustain's it no otherwise than as Present to it's several Parts, is agree'd by All Sober Reasoners. Hls Omnipresence and Universal Penetration are indisputably certain both from Scripture and Reason. The only Controversy is concerning the Manner of it.

Now, since in All Cases wherein the Learned differ 'tis not to be expected that Either of the Sides should want it's Difficultys, 'tis the Part of a Prudent Person to incline to That Side which, upon an Impartial Estimate, shal appear to have the Least and Fewest. 'Tis evident that there can be but Two Methods, in the General, of explaining the

the Manner of the Divine Omnipresence and Penetration of Matter; viz, either as With or Without Amplitude or Dimensions. The Difficultys which (as is humbly conceiv'd) attend the Latter Method have been elsewhere sufficiently detected. It remains that we here proceed to consider what may with any Plausibility be objected against the Former.

And shal we say, in opposition to this, that a Penetration of One Dimension by Another is Impossible? But it ha's been already prov'd to Be, and therefore not to be Impossible. Nor can this, I perswade my self, be surprising to any man who shal consider the Vast Disparity between a Penetration of Matter by Matter and the Penetration of Matter by a Being that is Immaterial

One Reason of the Absurdity and Impossibility of the Penetration of Matter by Matter is plainly this; Two Equal Portions of Matter, being of the Same Specificall Nature, have no other Distinction but such as proceed's from their Separate Existence joyn'd with the Various Figures and Contexture of their Parts. Could we therefore suppose Either so to penetrate the Other as that they should coëxist in the Same Space with the Same Figure and Texture of Parts, 'tis clear that, on this Supposition, they could no longer retain their Distinction but must become Numerically as wel as Specifically the Same. Consequently, to suppose a Penetration and Coëxistence of Two Bodys or Portions of Matter would be no less Absurd than to suppose Two Beings, stil retaining their Individual Distinction to become Numerically One. Than which, I confess, nothing can be more Extravagant But in the Supposition of a Penetration of Matter by a Nature Specifically Different, the Case is quite otherwise. For where Natures are so Opposite as to be Absolutely Incapable of a Proper Coalition, there the most Intimate Penetration can't abate the Distinction, nor hinder their retaining their respective Propertyts and Dimensions. And certainly, was it possible for Two Bodys to penetrate so as not to coalesce or cease to be Distinct, whoever should measure their Common Superficies would as really measure

Two

Two Equal Bulks as he would have done had he measur'd each of 'em Singly or Apart. For from their being Both measureable at Once we could no more infer that their Extension was Numerically the Same than we can conclude Two Equal Separate Bodys to have the Same Individual Dimensions because Successively measurable by the Same Instrument.

In consistence with This, 'tis observable that the First Philosophers who so much insisted on the Impossibility of a Penetration of Dimensions, viz; the *Atomists*, meant no more by it than that One Atom or Particle of Matter could not penetrate Another (a Supposition without which they could never have form'd their Worlds.) For thô they defin'd Matter to be *Διάστατον ἀντίτυπον*, or a *Thing Impenetrably Extended*, yet nothing is more certain than that they stil suppos'd a Penetration of their Atoms be the *Void* or Immaterial Expansion which they (as likewise the *Pythagoreans*) suppos'd to be a Real Being, thô Intangible.

A Second Reason of the Impossibility of a Penetration of One Body by Another is the Equality of their Natures. Every Particle of Matter ha's an Equal Reality, and None ha's any Essential Preëminence above Another. But the Case is quite Different (it we may be allow'd to make a Comparison) between Matter and the Eternal Immaterial Being. The Latter, as Selfexistent possesse's the Utmost Reality; the Former is Absolutely Contingent and, in effect, but a Heap of Dusts at one Remove from Nothing. And must we, yet, make the One the Standard of our Conceptions with respect to the Other? Because we perceive a Penetration of Beings whose Natures are Equal to be Absurd and Impossible, Must we presently conclude it's Impossible that the Eternal Nature, which possesse's the Highest Perfection of Being, should pervade a Nature so Imperfect as Matter, a Nature which include's so Inconsiderable a Share of Reality! Must we need's imagin That which so lately was Nothing to be on a sudden become such a Mighty Something as to exclude ev'n the Substance of it's Maker; in comparison of whom we may be assur'd that whatever we are apt to imagin to be the most Solid

Solid or Impenetrable is little more than a Shadow!

Thus, if we form but a True Notion of Matter, as a Created Dependent Being, those Mighty Difficultys will easily vanish. And, on the contrary, 'twil appear that the Immaterial Expansion, which our Weak and Vitiated Minds are so apt to regard as a Mere Nothing, is the Chief and Original Reality, and in effect the Only Firm and Durable Being.

But it may be further objected that Cogitation and Expansion are Inconsistent. This is an Objection which no doubt will seem of Weight to Some People. But what Proof have these Objectors produc't of this Confident Assertion?

First, say they, The Idea of Expansion or Extension do'sn't include that of Cogitation. This I confess is True, and from thence I conclude 'em to be Distinct. But what Rule of Arguing will allow us to infer an Absolute Inconsistence from a Bare Distinction?

Again, A Cogitative Being, say they, must needs be One and Indivisible. For if compounded, as Bodys are, Nothing in the Compound could be said Singly to perceive any Whole Object, but One Part of it would Perceive One, and Another another Part of the Object. Which they conceive to be Inconsistent with the Nature of a Cogitative Being. Yet whatever Force this Arguing may have to prove *Body* or *Matter* to be Incapable of Cogitation, 'tis clear it prove's nothing against the Possibility of an *Immaterial* Cogitative Being which consist's not of any Proper Parts, but is Uncompounded and Indivisible tho' Expanded; such as we shal hereafter demonstrate the Deity to be.

But it seem's there's a Method of demonstrating All Immaterial Beings to be nothing else but *Pure Cogitation*, and by consequence to be void of All Extension. For because the First Thing which a *Cartesian* after his Universal Doubting perceiv's in his Own Mind is Cogitation, or Thought, therefore he conclude's that his Mind and Whatever is Immaterial is no other than Pure Thought.

But tho' the Idea of Cogitation or Thought be own'd to
be

be our First Idea of an Immaterial Being, wil it therefore follow that it's the Only one? This would be in effect to assert that Our First Notions of Things are always Complete, and that because we usually at first discover but One Property of an Object, we ought to rest satisfy'd and spare our selves the pains of attempting any further Discovery.

But omitting the Weakness of the Proofs, let us consider the Thing it's Self. What Sence can we possibly make of a Being that's nothing but Pure Thinking! Can there be an Act without a Subject, without an Agent? Can there be an Act which is the Act of Nothing?

I know very wel that the *New Cartesians* to evade this Objection use sometimes to call such a Being *Substantial Thinking* or a General Thinking indifferent to any Particular Thought; and tell us that the Will is the Cause of Particular Thoughts by determining the General Thinking to Particular Objects: Which suppose's a General Indetermin'd Cogitation or Thinking to be, as it were, the Subject of Particular Thoughts, But how there can be such a General Thinking rather than a General Motion, without any Particular Direction, may deserve some Consideration.

I confess, this *Cartesian* Account of the Subject of Cogitation is so far from satisfying my Self, that I'm the more strongly confirm'd in the Opinion that Cogitation can't be without some sort of Extension or Expansion as it's Immediate Subject. Besides, having no other Notion of Cogitation than as by Ideas, it appear's to me impossible that any Being should either form or receive Ideas or Images of Extended Things in case it's Own Nature admit's of nothing like Extension. And this Method of arguing *Malebranch* (speaking of the *Humane Mind*) thought to carry so much Weight with it, that it oblig'd him to have recourse to his Wonderful Hypothesis of our *seeing All Things in God*. For, say's he, in his *Search*. Vol. 1. B. 3. *'tis impossible we should be able by our Selves to perceive Material Things; because they being Extended and our Souls not, there's no proportion between'em.* And thence he conclude's that, since we do perceive'em, we perceive'em

no otherwise than by the Divine Ideas. But whether this Argument wil not extend farther and prove as wel the Impossibility of the Perception of Extended Objects by Any Other Being which, like our Minds, is suppos'd to be void of All Extension or Expansion, may likewise deserve some Consideration.

'Twas partly the Force of this Argument too that oblig'd *Plato* to furnish his *Unextended Souls* with *Corporeal Vehicles*, which might assist 'em in receiving Ideas of Extended Objects. For (if we may credit *Aristotle*) 'twas a Maxim with Him that *Like is known by Like*, and that by consequence, a Subject absolutely void of Extension could have no Idea of Extended Things.

There's yet Another more Vulgar Maxim which wil furnish us with a Second Argument to the Present Purpose; and that is, *Nil dat quod in se non habet*, or Nothing can bestow what it ha's not in it's Self. For tho' we can't reasonably infer from thence that the Creator of Matter is himself Material (because the Imperfection of Matter ha's been shown to be inconsistent with the Perfection of the Eternal Being;) yet we may, 'tis humbly conceiv'd, very Fairly conclude that since he ha's created the Material Expansion therefore his Nature dosn't absolutely exclude such *Amplitude* or *Expansion* as is free from the foremention'd Imperfections of Matter: Just as we infer his *Wisdom* or *Goodness* from the Like Propertys in his Creatures. Whatever Property is free from Imperfection can't but be a Perfection. Consequently the Eternal Being could neither be in All respect's Perfect without it, nor can he be suppos'd to have bestow'd That Perfection on Others which he wanted Himself.

But whether these Reasonings are conclusive or not (which yet I perswade my self none wil ever be able to disprove) 'tis enough for our present Purpose that Cogitation and Expansion can't (as was before observ'd) be prov'd Inconsistent. Which Reflection, secure's (at least as far as We can determin) the Possibility of *Cogitative*, *Expanded Beings*.

And in this we have the Concurrence of the most Judicious

cious Mr. Locke, who in his *Essay of Humane Understanding* make's no Difficulty of affirming *That we can have no assurance of the Inconsistence of Expansion and Thought.*

Lastly, Some wil perhaps object that it's by no means safe to attribute any sort of Expansion to the Deity, because it seem's necessarily to imply Parts and Divisibility; which would be Inconsistent with his Perfection.

But this is no Real Difficulty. For since by *Parts* is here meant what may be Parted or Divided (which is indeed the Proper Notion of Parts) 'tis certain there can be no Real Parts in the Original Expansion which ha's been prov'd to pervade and contain the Created Universe; it being most Perfectly Indivisible. For seeing there can be no Real Division or Separation without Distance, nor Distance without Space, 'tis certain that where there's no Space Independent on That Space or Expansion of whose Divisibility we are discoursing or capable of being the Foundation of Distance between the Parts which might result from the Division, there can be no Real Division neither. But 'tis evident that to suppose a Real Division of the Original Expansion which Pervade's and Sustain's All Other Beings, is to suppose Distance without Space or (which in effect is the same) Space without Space: Than which there can be nothing more Absurd or Contradictory.

Tho' by what ha's been observ'd it may justly be concluded that the Existence of an Expansion distinct from Matter, and the Reality of a Penetration of Matter by that Immaterial Expansion are abundantly clear from Reason; yet that these Assertions may more fully appear to be neither Novel nor Dangerous, I shal add some Testimonys both Ancient and Modern.

To this purpose that Sentence of *Pythagoras* Father of the Italic Sect of Philosophers, as recorded by *Cicero*, is very remarkable, which (according to the Doctrine of the Ancient Egyptians) assert's *Deum esse Animum per Naturam Rerum omnium Intentum et Commeantem*; i: e: That God is a *Mind* inwardly Coexpanded with and Pervading the Nature of All Things. And it ha's been usual with the *Rabins* to give to the Deity the Denomination of *Place*,

to signify that he Pervade's and Comprehend's the Universe.

As for the Moderns; The Opinion of Dr. H: *More*, *Derodon*, and Others of their Time is wel known. And for Later Writers; The Learned Dr. *Cudworth* p. 14. of the Preface to his *Intellectual Systeme* hath these Words,
 „ Whether the Divine Substance be altogether Unextended or Extended otherwise than Bodys we shal leave to
 „ every man's own Judgment to determin, without dog-
 „ matically asserting any thing in a case which is no Article of Faith. And again p: 833. of the *Intell: Syst*: he
 „ add's Whatever the Truth of the case be, it
 „ m ust be acknowledg'd that the Hypothesis of an Extended [or Expanded] Deity may be very usefull and
 „ serviceable to retain Some in Theism who can by no
 „ means admit of a Deity or any thing else Unextended.

This it seem's was the Judgment of the Learned Doctor. And I take it that it's indeede the most effectual Method of dealing with Men of Atheistical Principles, who generally laugh at the Opinion of Unextended Beings as the most Absurd Notion in the World; and who having rejected That and, by consequence, infer'd that Whatever Is is Extended, are wont to make but One Step more by asserting with *Des Cartes* that whatever is Extended or Expanded is Material; and so they think they've gain'd their Point. Whereas by This Method of proving an Expansion essentially distinct from Matter they may, 'tis hop'd, be led to see their Reasoning is Inconclusive; and that tho' there should be no such thing as an *Unextended Substance*, yet there certainly is an *Immaterial Deity* who is the Creator and Sustainer of Matter.

But it ought not to be forgot that the most Judicious Mr. *Locke* give's us no obscure Intimation of his Opinion in the Present Case. Say's he, p: 87. of his *Essay of*
 „ *Humane Unâerstanding*, Whether any one wil take Space
 „ to be only a Relation resulting from the Existence of
 „ Things at a distance; or whether they wil think the

„ Words of the most Knowing King Solomon ; *The*
 „ *Heaven and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain thee*;
 „ or those more Emphatical ones of the Inspir'd Philo-
 „ sopher St. Paul, *In him we live, and move, and have*
 „ *our Being*, are to be understood in a Literal Sense,
 „ I leave every one to consider: Only our Idea of Space
 „ is, I think, such as I have mention'd and distinct
 „ from that of Body.

After the Testimonys of these Great Men I shal add
 but one more, and that is of the Ingenious Dr. Cheyne
 in his *Philosophical Principles of Natural Religion* Chap: 4,
 p: 19. Say's he, " I don't here determin whether Inf-
 „ nite Extension may be the Immensity of the First
 „ Great Being, tho perhaps there may be abundance of
 „ reason to lead one to think so.

Upon the Whole, I humbly conceive it wil sufficiently
 appear that , contrary to the Third and Last Grand
 Prejudice mention'd in the Begining of this Discourse,
 Expansion, in the Larger Sense of the Word, ought not
 to be reputed (as usual) to be merely Accidental to Being
 in General; but that it's to be esteem'd the very Fun-
 damental Notion of All Beings, or *Substance* it's Self.
 For That must, 'tis humbly conceiv'd, be the Funda-
 mental Notion of All Beings (or *Substance*) without which
 no imaginable Propertys can be conceiv'd to exist, and
 which may it's self be conceiv'd to exist with the Ab-
 sence of Any particular Property whatever. Which is
 certainly the case of Expansion or Space.

Here I can't but take notice of what I conceive to
 be a great Mistake in Some very Acute Writers; who
 frequently confound *Essence* with *Substance*. Whereas
 Essence is properly a Complication of several Attributes
 whereby one Class of Beings is distinguish'd from All
 others. But what is meant by Substance appear's to be
 a Simple Thing, Common to Whatever exist's. That
 Extension was the Substance of All Bodys the Cartesians
 might have rightly enough concluded from it's being
 the *Substratum* of All their known Propertys, or That
 without which none of those Propertys can be conceiv'd.

But

But by calling it, not the Substance but, the Essence of Matter, and thereby denying it to Other Beings, they not only confounded very Different Ideas, viz Matter and Extension, but depriv'd us (as the Schoolmeo had done before'em) of all possibility of attaining any Knowledge of Substance, according to Their Principles. For if Extension (or Expansion) be not the *Substratum* necessarily presuppos'd to the Propertys of All Beings, it seem's absolutely Impossible there should be any Notion of Substance at all. If Extension be an Attribute or Property, then, for ought I can perceive, Substance must be reputed a mere Chimera, and nothing must be allow'd to exist but Propertys and Accidents, All subsisting by Themselves and Each in the Other. At least, 'tis vain for Us ever to talk of *Substance*, since we can have no Idea of it but what is Inconsistent in it's Self. For it seem's Not to have been without Sufficient Reason that Mr. *Hobbes* and Others have contended that *Unextended Substance* is a Contradiction in Terms. And, on the Contrary, had the Same *Cartesians* concluded *Cogitation* to be the *Essence only* of Spirits, it might have partly been admitted; since 'tis that which chiefly distinguishes 'em from Other Beings. But by affirming it to be the very *Substance* of Spirit, they expos'd themselves to Inextricable Difficultys; Inasmuch as the Essence of any Being (since 'tis what is Peculiar to it) can't but be Distinct from it's Substance, whose Nature must be conceiv'd to be in General the Same and Common to Every Being.

Here it's obvious to Every one to observe that Mr. *Lock's* Story of the Elephant and Tortoise very wel expose's the Contradictory Notion Those must have of *Substance* who imagin Extension or Expansion to be no more than an Accident of Being in General or a Property of Certain Beings in Particular. For if any of Those should be askt What is the Subject wherein Colour or Weight or any Other Property inhere's, he could have nothing to reply but that it's the Solid Extended Parts. And if it were further demanded Wherein do's that Solidity and Extension inhere? he would not be in a much better case than the Indian Phi-

osopher who, saying that the World was supported by a Great Elephant, and being askt What the Elephant rested on, reply'd 'twas a Great Tortoise; but being again prest to explain what gave Support to the Broad-backt Tortoise, reply'd, Something he Knew not what. From which Story I conceive the only Natural Inference is that either Expansion must be allow'd to be the Substance or Fundamental Notion of All Beings, or else that we must either own an Unsurmountable Ignorance, or must be so Absurd as to suppose Something which it's Self is Expansion to be the *Substratum* or Foundation of Expansion. For an Unexpanded *Substratum* of Expansion is a Contradiction in Terms.

2. OF DURATION.

DURATION seem's to me to be no other than a Phantasm of Space or Expansion. We get the Notion of it by reflecting on the Succession of Ideas in our Minds: Which we are apt to conceive as a Chain drawn out in Length, of which the Particular Ideas are consider'd as the Links. For since we find the Idea of Local Motion to be Always connected with Space, thence we come to Phancy a Sort of Space or Expansion in our Existence and in that of Other Beings, to which the Succession of our Ideas (being conceiv'd as a Motion) is imagin'd to be commensurate.

To this Phantasm of Space we have giv'n the Name of *Duration*. Whereas, had we but One Invariate Perception without any such Succession of Ideas in our Minds, we could have no such Notion as this of Duration, but That of Pure Existence only. For we find that when the Train or Succession of our Ideas is interrupted (as it sometimes happen's in our Sleep) our Notion of Duration cease's, and upon our Waking we are Insensible of any Space that interven'd.

Tho' Succession include's a Real Quantity which is Absolute or Independent on our Imaginations, yet Existence (as was observ'd in the Chapter of *Eternity*) include's no Quantity but

but what is purely Imaginary. Whatever Quantity we therefore attribute to Duration agree's not to it as it signifies Existence, but merely as it connotes some Real Succession. Thus, if we say there was a Real Distance between the First and Tenth Olympiads, this is for no other Reason True than because there had been a Real Continu'd Succession which was the Foundation of the Distance between these Two Periods.

So well, it seem's, had *Aristotle* comprehended the Nature of Duration (tho he gave it the Name of *Time*) when he defin'd it to be *the Measure of Motion*. Which imply's that if there had never been any Motion (or Succession at least) there could, in His Opinion, have been no Proper Duration.

It must yet be confest we can no more avoid conceiving Eternity (or the Divine Existence) ev'n before any Real Succession began, under the Notion of a Continu'd Series or Succession than we can avoid conceiving a Space ev'n beyond the Utmost Limits of the Universe. But this (as we elsewhere observ'd) must, in both cases, be resolv'd into the Imperfection of our Nature and Circumstances.

We can have no Idea of an Unsuccessive Duration; since (as was shown) our Idea of Duration ha's a Necessary Connection with Succession. There may indeed be a Nature which do'sn't Necessarily include any Real Succession (as was observ'd in the Chapter of Eternity;) but if we attribute a Necessary Duration to Such a Being, we lose the Genuin Conception of Duration.

An Eternal Duration is therefore as Unintelligible as an Eternal Succession was Impossible. For if a Necessary Succession be (as was prov'd) Inconsistent with the Nature of Eternity, 'tis manifest that an Eternal or Necessary Duration is a Connection of Words whose Ideas are Absolutely Incompatible.

Consequently, as we before observ'd, the True Conception of Eternity can be no other than that of *Necessary Existence*. For since Duration add's nothing to the Idea of Existence but only a Relation to Succession, it follow's that if, in any case, we abstract Succession from any Particular

ticular Being (as we have seen Reason to do in a Certain Case or State with reference to the Eternal Being) out Idea of it's Duration wil, in That Case, be reduc'd to that of Simple Existence. To which if we add Necessity, we have all that's contain'd in the Notion of Eternity.

To conclude, It must stil be remember'd that both the Eternity and Omniprésence of God are Certain; and tho we Knew nothing of the Manner, they would be never the less so. But the Natural Curiosity of Man, and his Unwillingness to believe any thing which he can't in some measure account for, have render'd such Discourses as These Necessary. And indeed the Scandal which the Usual Accounts of those Important Articles of Natural Religion have occasion'd wil alone yield a Sufficient Apology for any Modest Attempt of this Nature.

Errata.

Besides the Dividing of a Syllable at the End of a Line (which has sometimes happen'd) and a Few Trivial Literal Mistakes, the Following *Errata* of a Grosser Nature have escap'd the Corrector's care.

Page 13. l. 14. r. Resentments. P. 14. l. 7. r. weakness.
 P. 29. l. 9. r. Perfect. P. 38. l. 36. r. in P. 43. l. 5. r. we are
 P. 52. l. 4. dele to P. 76. l. 20. r. If. P. 98. l. ult: dele be P.
 116. l. 36. r. advanc'd. P. 119. l. 16. r. only. P. 116. l. 25. r. Extent.
 P. 191. l. 32. r. with P. 195. l. 16. r. Passiveness. P. 192
 l. ult. r. Two Right Angles. P. 102 l. 9
 for Absolutely r. Really. P. 175 l. 10
 for by r. with. P. 221 l. 12 after
 Cogitation r. and the Reverse.